'This is what Salvation must be like after a While': Bob Dylan's Critical Utopia

KOUVAROU, MARIA

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Maria Kouvarou

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in Musicology

Music Department

Durham University

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Abstract

Bob Dylan's work has frequently been the object of discussion, debate and scholarly research. It has been commented on in terms of interpretation of the lyrics of his songs, of their musical treatment, and of the distinctiveness of Dylan's performance style, while Dylan himself has been treated both as an important figure in the world of popular music, and also as an artist, as a significant poet. In his prolific output Dylan deals with a number of recurring themes, which he constantly revisits and develops. One of these themes is the perpetual search for salvation, which runs throughout his entire work, while at the same time taking significantly different forms.

I argue in this dissertation that Dylan's search for salvation takes place within a distinct range of different contexts, which include the longing for social salvation, the striving towards individual fulfilment, the desire for salvation through romantic relationships, and the constant journey towards an idealized place that will bring about a sense of salvation and redemption, while at the same time the idea of religious salvation in a more general sense can also be seen as hovering over all of these more specific contexts.

I aim to demonstrate that Dylan's search for salvation has a strongly utopian character, a search for something characterized by hope, but which, however close it might seem to be, is nevertheless not achieved in reality. Drawing on approaches derived in part from the critical theorist Ernst Bloch and also on more recent writers on the concept of Utopia, I argue that it is through this utopian dimension that Dylan's work also functions as critique. Dylan, in showing the world's situation as it *should be* shows us simultaneously the way it actually *is*, and it is the gulf between these two that functions as critique.

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Statement of Copyright

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Introduction

Aims and Rationale

In this dissertation I aim to demonstrate the ways in which the notion of salvation is treated in the work of Bob Dylan. As Michael Gray points out, the continuous search for 'salvation' is constantly evident in Dylan's songs. He writes: 'In fact the quest for salvation might well be called the central theme of Bob Dylan's entire output'.[1] Steven Heine, in *Bargainin' for Salvation: Dylan, a Zen master?* which explores the search for salvation through Dylan's songs, supports Gray's view and goes further by claiming that in the whole corpus of his work Dylan sees himself as an outcast constantly struggling to attain redemption, trying to find his way to the gates of heaven.[2] This quest for salvation and redemption represents, of course, the strongly utopian character of Dylan's music, where the imagery of 'heaven' signifies Utopia. The German critical theorist and Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch, much of whose work focuses on the concepts of hope and of Utopia, has pointed out that, as far as the request for heaven and the life after death is concerned, 'This is indeed the divine realm, that which appears at the end, or that which announces, that which the Messiah, which Christ brings….'[3] Dylan, of course, does not give a specific religious character in his work that proclaims his appeals for heavenly paradise, apart from the small period of time when his work was overtly Christian during the late 1970s and the very beginning of the 1980s. As Mellers has argued, 'Always Dylan's 'criticism of life' involved the possibility for a "religious" interpretation. It was not specifically Christian and it did not need to be; given his Midwestern background, however, it is

[1] Michael Gray, *Song and Dance Man III: The Art of Bob Dylan* (Essex: Continuum Press, 2000), p.207-8
[2] Steven Heine, *Bargainin' for Salvation: Dylan, a Zen master?* (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), p.1
[3] Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, transl. by Jack Zipes and Frank Meckelnburg (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), p.6

surprising that in *Slow Train Coming*, it should have taken a Christian revivalist form.'[4] It can be argued that it is perhaps not a particularly surprising development in a person's life that they should turn their hopes directly to religion if they come to the realization that the pleasures of the world alone cannot provide a sense of salvation and spiritual fulfillment. Nevertheless, while religion might underlie a person's world view, it might not necessarily take a specifically religious form. In McGregor's view, religion had always been a constant subject of Dylan's work, not only in terms of his use of biblical language and allusions, but also in terms of the perpetual handling of the issue of the relationship between Man and God.[5] The theme of religious salvation has a persistent place in Dylan's work, in images of sinners and saints, jokers and thieves and faith healers which are often present in his songs. However, apart from his overtly religious creative years, when he claimed himself to be a born-again Christian, he always gave these issues a secular character.[6]

As indicated above, Dylan's search for salvation can be seen from the perspective of a man trying to reach spiritual heaven, and Bloch can be brought out again here, as he has suggested that this Utopian view – which is particularly linked with Christianity – has developed out of a need for men to believe that death is not final, and thus that human life is not meaningless.[7] It is the argument of this dissertation that the utopian vision of Dylan's songs has a strongly critical and moral function, without acquiring a religious character, in the sense that, as stated before, his only overt religious references have been the ones made with the songs of his 'Christian period' that lasted roughly from 1978 until 1983. I argue in this dissertation

[4] Wilfrid Mellers, 'God, Modality and Meaning in Some Recent Songs of Bob Dylan' in *Popular Music*, 1 (1981), p.146
[5] Craig McGregor, 'Introduction' in *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, Craig McGregor (ed.) (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1973), p.8
[6] R. Clifton Spargo and Anne K. Ream, 'Bob Dylan and Religion' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*, Kevin J. Dettmar (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.93
[7] Bloch (1989), p.10

that this need for salvation that can be traced in Dylan's work acquires a hovering religious character – not of a specific religiosity though – and this is why it should not be considered as a separate tendency, as much as it had been taken to an extreme end by Dylan in his Christian years. It has however been explored in other ways in his work like the appeal for a saved, fair society, the achievement of an individual fulfilment, the safety of a complete romantic relationship and the movement to a special location – either mental or physical – which can bring about a sense for salvation and fulfillment. While the above tendencies are extensively discussed throughout this dissertation I have to clarify at this point that religious salvation would not be treated likewise, as is a running subtheme throughout, not only because of Dylan's constant use of biblical language, but also because of the hovering idea of religiosity throughout his output. Nevertheless, because the influence of religion and biblical language in Dylan is so pronounced I shall return to it in my concluding chapter. Dylan's search for salvation can be seen in the light of utopian theories as it acquires, as has already been mentioned, a strongly critical and moral function. It can be argued that, Dylan, in showing the world's situation as it should be shows us simultaneously the way it actually is, and it is the gulf between these two that functions as critique. This position taken by Dylan can be seen as acquiring the overtones of a persistent hope for the improvement of the world's situation. This view can be supported by Ruth Levitas, who, in her book *The Concept of Utopia*, writes: 'Sometimes utopia embodies more than an image of what the good life would be and becomes a claim about what it could and should be: the wish that things might be otherwise becomes a conviction that it does not have to be like this.'[8] Thus, Dylan's critique of the world as it is, and his constant search for what can be seen as a utopian

[8] Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p.1

state of salvation, is simultaneously evoking the images of possible alternatives for a better life.

The rationale of this dissertation is partly to do with the continuing interest in Dylan's work, which, quite apart from the multitude of journalistic commentaries that have appeared over the last 50 years or so, has also developed steadily and increasingly within academic studies across a range of disciplines, including English literature, sociology and theology as well as musicology. Some examples are Mellers (1984, 1981), Negus (2008), Bowden (2001), Gilmour (2004), Heine (2009), and Ricks (2004). The concept of salvation emerges in a number of these studies (for example, Heine, Mellers, Gilmour). It is not, however, developed particularly critically, and is nowhere linked with the concept of Utopia. It is my intention in this dissertation to show how the concept of salvation in Dylan's work has a critical function through its relation to the concept of Utopia.

Conceptual Framework[9]

What is meant by the term 'salvation' in this context is the preservation and deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss, as well as the sources and means of being saved in this way. As a theological terminology, 'salvation' represents the deliverance from sins and its consequences, occurring, in Christian belief, by faith in Christ. In biblical language, 'salvation' is interpreted to mean everything God has done, is doing and will do for human who suffer from the misery, mortality and the meaninglessness of the human condition. In other words, and more suitably for the context in which I am placing the term, 'salvation' is the attempt to reach a 'place' (physical or mental),

[9] The two main sources I used for the definitions of the terms I present in this part are: Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1998) and Judy Pearsall (ed.), *The Concise English Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

which may as well be a utopian one, where someone can find peace and safety. The constant search for 'individual fulfillment' or, 'spiritual fulfillment' which is very often evident in Dylan's work, can again be related to the constant search for 'salvation'. In Christian terms 'salvation' is the deliverance from the punishment of sin and the agent or means that brings about such deliverance.

The concept of 'salvation' comes with a cluster of other closely associated concepts which belong to its orbit. Important among these is 'redemption', the payment of an obligation. Someone is redeemed if he gets compensated for the faults, as well as if he makes up for past poor performance or behaviour. 'Redemption' is also the idea of paying a price to regain something and, as a biblical term, has two overtones; while it implies deliverance and restoration, it also involves a cost that needs to be paid. In Christian terms 'redemption' is salvation from sin through Jesus' sacrifice. 'Redemption', as stated in *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, has been through distinct developments as we move from the Old Testament to the New Testament.[10] While in the Old Testament sin is mostly associated with retribution and followed by punishment, in the New Testament it is more likely to be linked with the idea of redemption, through the Love of God. This attitude has also been evident in Dylan's use of biblical language where, especially in his early songs, he treats unrighteous people with unforgiving feelings, always aiming for their punishment. Dylan's Judaic interpretation of the Bible is replaced by the time *John Wesley Harding* is released with the idea and need for forgiveness and redemption. Bert Cartwright comments on Dylan's biblical imagery by exemplifying five different phases of his development as a songwriter. The first phase lasted from 1961 until 1966 when Dylan used the Bible as a part of the cultures of the American white and

[10] Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III et al.(eds.), p.698

black poor, and used biblical language in favour of them. The second phase lasted until he wrote *John Wesley Harding.* Dylan's biblical imagery was more indirect but still strongly evident. Phase three lasted from 1974 up to 1978. Through this phase Dylan 'used the Bible as material for a sophisticated artist who had learned consciously to work simultaneously on several levels of meaning', while he used the Bible as a believer and preaching device in the fourth phase that lasted from 1978 until 1983, the years of his Christian conversion. Finally, after 1983, 'biblical faith had been internalized sufficiently for it to serve subtly as Dylan's worldview'.[11] In Mike Marqusee's opinion, the influence of Bible on Dylan's songwriting is not to be seen as a religious influence. He suggests that Dylan was drawn to it because biblical language was archaic and resonant, it used the power of metaphorical imagery and it conveyed feelings of mystery.[12] In Negus' view,

> In juxtaposing imagery from different sources in his songwriting, Dylan has consistently used a vocabulary derived from the Bible. Biblical imagery has been a pervasive presence as narrators and characters search but never find some form of redemption.[13]

Related to the idea of 'redemption' is also the plea of the 'Day of Judgment', with the apocalyptic meanings used so often in Dylan's songs. The day of the Last Judgment is considered to be positive for the oppressed, who will be finally saved, but negative for the unrighteous who are finally punished. Another related term is 'atonement' which in secular terms is the reparation for a wrong or injury, while, as a theological definition it implies the reconciliation of God with humanity. For someone's

[11] Bert Cartwright, *The Bible in the Lyrics of Bob Dylan*, rev. ed. (Lancashire: Wanted Man, 1992), p.15: Cartwright's observations are also stated by Gray, p.169 and Michael J. Gilmour, p.2
[12] Mike Marqusee, *Chimes of Freedom: The Politics of Bob Dylan's Art* (New York: The New Press, 2003), p.237
[13] Keith Negus, *Bob Dylan* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2008), p.111

'atonement', both in secular and sacred meanings, 'repentance' is required; the feeling of regret about something wrong done. In the Bible, Paul's interpretation of repentance is characteristic. He explains repentance as to be the understanding of wrong done, the need for justice and the desire for God's presence.

In some cases the terms 'deliverance' and 'rescue' are used, referring again to the recovery or preservation from loss or danger, while 'reconciliation' – in the sense of admitting one man's sins – will be mentioned in some others. In secular terms 'reconciliation' is the restoration of friendly relations, the settlement of quarrels, while in its biblical use, 'reconciliation' comes between God and a sinful man through forgiveness. 'Retribution' is also a state often met in Dylan's songs, in cases in which someone has to pay for his actions. There is a specific period in Dylan's work that is characterized by 'conversion', as spiritual rebirth; a spiritual enlightenment which leads a person to a new approach to life. This notion can also be applied to other periods of Dylan's work, used in a more indirect way. The theme of 'salvation' is constantly applied in Dylan's work, taking various forms – the request for a saved society, freed from political and social injustice, the longing for a fulfilling relationship between lovers, the hope for individual fulfilment which brings peace within oneself, the journey to a special place where someone can reach peace, and, eventually, the recognition of resolution, every man's destination, in death. The claim for 'salvation' does not always have a positive outcome in Dylan's work. Sometimes it can be achieved, sometimes it is present but not achievable, sometimes it is unattainable. Examples of songs for each of these categories will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

Having identified here the key concepts that underpin this dissertation, I now go on to discuss methodological issues concerning the approach I have taken. This is

followed by a literature survey which has a double purpose. First, it is designed to provide an historical context raising important issues in Dylan's work, such as his lyrical writing, the musical treatment of his songs, the effects of performance, the importance of his constant musical style-shifting, and the role of the audience in his work. And second, it also serves to provide perspectives on these issues to be found in the writings of the main commentators on Dylan's work. I conclude the Introduction with an overview of the main issues addressed in the dissertation, an outline of its structure, with a brief commentary on each chapter.

Methodology

Taking a critical approach to the work of a popular songwriter like Dylan can be a tricky issue; songs consist of lyrics, music and performance, and technological means are utilized in ways that contribute in very fundamental terms to the final effect. Thus, before commenting on Dylan's songs, we should first clarify which particular aspects of the song are being taken most seriously into account.

For the analysis of popular music in general the use of traditional musicological approaches is not always practical or productive, as this kind of approach deals with the notion of a 'pure text', taking the score as the main reference point for understanding a piece of music. Allan Moore argues that traditional musicology has its limitations as a medium for the analysis of popular music, and he points to the multi-dimensionality of popular songs, which consist of 'rhythm *and* harmony *and* melody *and* instrumental timbre *and* lyrics and, quite possibly, other elements as well'.[14] Each of these elements is individually important, but the way they work together is also equally important. Roy Shuker, on the other hand, claims

[14] Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text: Developing a Musicology of Rock* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), p.31

that popular songs are mostly 'interpreted through performance, and are received primarily in terms of the body and emotions rather than as pure text'.[15] According to Richard Middleton, when the 'pure text' in its notated form is used as the medium for analyzing songs, then aspects such as rhythm, timbre and performance, all of them determinative elements for the formation of the final effect of a song, are not given necessary attention.[16]

Even though in earlier years the value of popular music was neglected by academic musicologists, it is taken more seriously into account in the last two decades. Many scholars such as Middleton, Moore and Tagg are still taking a musicological approach to the study of popular music, but they do so in a different form than that utilized for the study of 'serious music', as these different musics consist of very different types of texts. In both types of musicology, as Shuker has insisted, a consistent musical terminology is indispensible.[17] As Moore suggests, there are three main approaches for the analysis of popular music, the first one being pre-analytical, aiming 'to elucidate theoretical approaches pertinent to the music', while the two others are strictly analytical: the 'one aims to unearth the "meaning" of individual songs, while the other aims to discover the characteristic features of particular styles'.[18] Shuker supports the view that a musicological approach is inadequate for the study of popular music, as, focusing on the text alone, prevents us from discovering the effects the music has on the listener; how pleasure is created through consumption, the relationship to the body, the generation of emotions and sexuality as reactions to the act of listening.[19] Similarly, when a notation-centric approach is utilized for the analysis of popular songs, aspects of them like non-

[15] Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), p.140
[16] Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, (Buckingham: Open University Press), p.111
[17] Shuker (2005), p.140
[18] Moore, p.11
[19] Shuker (2005), p.141

standard pitch, irregular rhythm, articulation, performance, timbre and recording techniques are usually underscored and neglected, leading as a result to an incomplete analysis.[20] It is important to specify that despite the variety of the musicological approaches utilized in popular music studies these are used either for the analysis of individual songs, trying to discover their meaning through musicological theories, or are interested in the style of different songs, with the latter not to take individual songs' meanings into account.[21] A notation-centric approach is of vital importance for art music analysis, but it is not so for popular music analysis. In Moore's words:

> The rock score, where one exists, is actually a transcription of what has already been performed and produced. Therefore, although the analysis of art music *is*, normally, the analysis of the score, an analysis of rock *cannot* follow the same procedure. It must refer to the primary text, which is, in this case, what is heard. And yet, we cannot ignore notation altogether, since it does play a role (sheet music remains available), and can be valuable if its use is carefully considered.[22]

Apart from the relationship between texts and listeners, the historical location of the text and its performers should also be taken into account.[23]

In many cases scholars tend to analyze popular songs by focusing on the words alone; this was a tendency most common through the 1950s and 1960s in the work of music sociologists.[24] As Middleton says, 'most study of lyrics has taken the form of content analysis – which tends to oversimplify the relationship between words and 'reality', and to ignore the structural specificity of the verbal and musical

[20] Middleton, p.105
[21] Moore, p.15
[22] Ibid, p.33
[23] Shuker (2005), p.141
[24] Ibid, p.141: Shuker gives Simon Frith as an example of a sociologist who took this stance.

signifying systems'.[25] Moore writes that: 'It is perhaps because of music's persistent ineffability and resistance to enquiries that attempt to refer it to "the outside world" that many commentators write as if it is merely a pleasant backdrop to the lyrics, and concentrate either on the interpretation of the lyrics themselves or on the persona embodied in the human voice.'[26] However, the lyrics do not simply provide the meaning of a song; they contribute as one of a number of different elements which interact for the formation of meaning. As much as the words have the ability to give some meaning to the music, they also can have their meaning altered by the musical treatment.[27] Lyrics, even if being spoken in specific words, create a meaning which can be altered by the effect of the musical treatment and vocal delivery. It is important to acknowledge that most people do not pay attention to the lyrics when they first listen to a song, as they focus on the totality of it, namely the overall sound.[28]

Another aspect that should be taken into account in the analysis of popular songs is the vocal performance itself. Middleton writes that 'there is a strong tendency for vocals to act as a unifying focus within the song. The continuity and diagetic function of almost all vocal melody draw us along the linear thread of the song's syntagmatic structure, producing a "point of perspective" from which the otherwise disparate parts of the musical texture can be placed within a coherent "image"'[29]. It is commonly accepted, as far as popular songs are concerned, that performance can transform a composition. Middleton supports the above view with reference to Billie Holiday's performance on the 1936 recording of 'These Foolish Things' as an example which, while maintaining the known character of the song, reinvents its

[25] Middleton, p.227-8
[26] Moore, p.158
[27] Middleton, p.228: Middleton uses Laign's theory to support his argument.
[28] Shuker (2005), p.148: Lyrics can also be misconstrued by the listeners.
[29] Middleton, p.264

vocal melody.[30] Performance can therefore be a determinative element for popular music songs. As Middleton writes, '[o]ne obvious general point can be made: that popular music is overwhelmingly a "voice music". The pleasure of singing, of hearing singers is central to it'[31]. The difficulty arises with the fact that vocal and timbral qualities cannot be described adequately in any system of visual representation, whether through traditional notation or through some other form of graphic representation, and this is a further example in support of Moore's emphasis on the insufficiency of notation-centric analysis for popular music.[32] This calls to mind the argument put forward by Roland Barthes in his famous essay 'The Grain of the Voice' something echoed by Middleton in *Studying Popular Music* with reference to Barthes' attempts to identify the pleasures of performance, especially singing.[33]

Bearing the above in mind, we should now turn to consider these methodological issues in relation to Dylan's work. Important readings that cover Dylan's songs in terms of lyrics, music and performance will be discussed later in this chapter. The most common debate concerning Dylan, as we shall see, is whether his lyrics should be considered as poetry, and whether they constitute the most important element of his art. The quality of his lyrics is remarkably high, but they remain ingredients of songs, functioning in combination with other elements. Longhurst supports the view that popular songs should be analyzed in three dimensions: the performance, the musical genre and the way the lyrics operate in relation to rhythm and sound, thus no individual element of a popular song is the determinative one.[34] As Ricks states in his book about Dylan, there must be an 'equilateral thinking of Bob

[30] Ibid, p.53
[31] Ibid, p.261
[32] Moore, p.33
[33] Middleton, p.267
[34] Brian Longhurst, *Popular Music and* Society (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.173

Dylan' in terms of his songwriting; a triangle between music, his voices and his words.[35]

From a more general point of view the process of treating the distinction between poetry and song lyric as a distinction between written and spoken word can be misleading. Poetry and song share continuity rather than a clear separation. Between the two there are, as Frith points out, some other types of 'performed' language, for example 'oral poetry' or public uses of words for special purposes like nursery and advertising rhymes.[36] Gray supports this argument by stating that the root of both poetry and literature in general is oral art; in almost every culture the oldest vehicle for poetry was song. Besides, poetry and music have an important unifying element; rhythm.[37] Additionally, the music is the means that makes the songs' words memorable, as the lyrics can usually only be recalled in combination with the melody and rhythm that accompanies them.[38]

Frith, isolating the element of lyrics in popular songs, makes yet another distinction; what we hear in the lyrics of songs are words that give the song an independent source of meaning, rhetoric in the way the words are used in a musical way that is connected with features of speech, and voices in the way the words are sung, gaining meaning from the singer's personality.[39] The song lyrics have in many cases provided the occasion for much textual analysis of popular music, especially within the field of the sociology of popular music. The fact that this trend has been tempered in recent years (although the approach has continued) is positive for popular

[35] Ricks, p.11
[36] Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.178
[37] Gray, p.225
[38] Frith (1996), p.160
[39] Ibid, p.159

music studies in general, as songs should be heard as a whole and, as Shuker argues, their importance should not be narrowed down to 'a simple slogan or message'.[40]

On the other hand some scholars argue that the lyrics should not be taken into consideration at all because the audience does not pay attention to them or, if they do, they interpret them in a different way.[41] This statement cannot easily be accepted as the lyrics might not be the main element of a song, but they are still a strong communicative means for the artist. As Poague observes, one of the major problems of critical musicology, as far as popular music is concerned, is the stance where the importance of the performance in the creation of meaning in popular songs is being ignored.[42] Wicke adds that in rock music expression is achieved with the combination of rhythm, sound, gestures, but, above all, voice, as the human voice has the ability of showing and communicating feelings.[43] What matters in songs is not *what* is being said but *how* it is being said – what type of language is being used and what type of voice.[44] On the other hand Gilmour suggests that song lyrics, even if written to be combined with music, if they appear in written form give the reader the advantage to 'slow-down, reflect and cross-reference' in a way that recorded or songs performed live do not allow.[45]

To conclude, even if Dylan is acclaimed primarily because of his lyrics, other elements of his art should not be underestimated. The listener, when hearing a song, enters a sound experience, where feelings are created through the correlation of the words, the music and the impact of the performance, the vocal delivery. Even if the lyrics have a really strong impact on their own, they cannot possibly be separated

[40] Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music*, (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.179-81
[41] Longhurst, p.172
[42] Poague, p.79
[43] Wicke, p.19
[44] Frith (1996), p.163
[45] Gilmour, p.7

from the way they are delivered in performance.[46] Negus comments on the way literary critics deal with Dylan's lyrics by saying: 'None of this literary criticism is too bothered about the power, persuasiveness and *musicality* of the lyrics[.]'[47] Indeed, Dylan's words, even in their form as lyrics, can be heard as heightened speech, performed often in a declamatory way.[48] They indicate that they are not written as words to be read, but words to be *performed*. This can be a proof that song lyrics cannot be conceived as poems, as in the case of songs where the words are communicated through the singing voice, and it is the effect of the vocal delivery as combined with the music backing that affects the way the song is interpreted by the audience.[49] To reiterate, the voice in the songs, as Ricks argues, has the same effect as does punctuation in the printed form of words; it produces meaning,[50] and this supports Frith's view that the way the performer decides to place stress on specific words is a matter of great importance for the unfolding of the song's meaning.[51] The punctuation system of songs is distinctively different from the one for poetry and prose. According to Ricks, one has to consider the effect that can be achieved with melisma; the cases when one word or even a single syllable flowers into a passage of several notes.[52] Gray supports the above as a reply to those who consider Bob Dylan as a poet by stating that '[his] finished works of art are his recordings. Like his vocal performances and his music, his words are just ingredients'.[53]

However, musicological analysis, word analysis and performance analysis are not the only approaches we can take towards the study of Dylan's work; being

[46] Williams(i), p.91
[47] Negus, p.104
[48] Max Paddison made this suggestion in one of our conversations, and, it was indeed an important help for the identification of Dylan's words' characteristics.
[49] Marshall (2007), p.25
[50] Ricks, p.19
[51] Simon Frith (1996), p.181
[52] Ricks, p.403
[53] Gray, p. 1

constantly committed to musical style shifting, Dylan gives us the opportunity to comment on his work with this characteristic in mind, trying to trace his influences and how he treats them. Style shifting is not a superficial issue as far as Dylan's art is concerned, and it is an aspect of his songwriting which, if taken seriously into account, could be helpful for the interpretation of his work.

All the above approaches need to be taken into account in any adequate study of Dylan's songs, and will need to be combined to help us achieve a satisfactory interpretation of his work. An important aspect of this process of interpretation is the clear identification of an appropriate conceptual context within which Dylan's work can be interpreted. This we have done provisionally at the outset. This now needs to be combined with a survey of important issues arising from Dylan's work seen in their historical context, in the light of important debates to be found in the writings of Dylan's commentators. This will serve to provide a context of ideas within which to situate the rest of this study.

Issues in Dylan

'I'm a poet and I know it': the importance of Dylan's lyrics

One aspect of Bob Dylan's work that has concerned many scholars is the issue of whether the lyrics of his songs can be viewed as poetry. If we take into consideration the fact that he was nominated for a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1996[54] it could be assumed that Dylan can undoubtedly be regarded as a poet;[55] the real issue in this case, however, is whether it is possible for song lyrics that are designed to be heard in combination with music and performance to be regarded as autonomous poetic objects.

[54] Heine suggests that Dylan was actually nominated several times for the Nobel Prize for Literature, p.53

[55] Michael J. Gilmour, *Tangled Up In the Bible: Bob Dylan & Scripture* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), p.6

Christopher Ricks seems to agree with the view that Bob Dylan is a poet. In his book *Dylan's Visions of Sins*[56] he treats the artist's lyrics in the same way that someone might treat the poetry of Milton and Tennyson, making an extended study of Bob Dylan's lyrics in terms of their poetic form. As Ricks is a professor of literature and a literary critic the emphasis of his approach to Dylan is not unexpected. What generates the surprise here is that in Ricks' book Dylan is regarded as being among the finest poets of his time. Another example where Dylan's songs are given a similarly extended literary analysis is in Michael Gray's book *Song and Dance Man III*[57] where Dylan's use of the blues, nursery rhymes, films and biblical language is studied extensively. Aidan Day gives a poetic study of selected Dylan songs which he connects with the theme of identity, commenting on how the issue of identity is applied in Dylan in a variety of ways.[58] Frank Davey also provides a poetic study of Dylan's work, though on a smaller scale in an article called 'Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan: Poetry and the Popular Song'.[59] Emphasizing the poetic in Dylan's lyrics is also evident in Anthony Scaduto's biography, written in the early years of Dylan's career, the years when his lyrics were linked with social issues. It is important to note at this point the publication of Bob Dylan, *Lyrics: 1962-2001*[60], as by issuing the lyrics separately in printed form in a way demands a reading of them as poems. Cartwright's *The Bible in the Lyrics of Bob Dylan*[61] and Gilmour's *Tangled Up in the Bible: Bob Dylan & Scripture*[62] emphasize through lyrical studies the ways in which different biblical passages are integrated in Dylan's lyrics.

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[56] Christopher Ricks, *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (London: Penguin Books, 2004)
[57] Gray
[58] Aidan Day, *Jokerman: Reading the Lyrics of Bob Dylan* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988)
[59] Frank Davey, 'Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan: Poetry and the Popular song', http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/2667/art1.htm
[60] Bob Dylan, *Lyrics: 1962-2001* (London: Simon & Schuster Ltd, 2004)
[61] Bert Cartwright, *The Bible in the Lyrics of Bob Dylan* (San Rafael: Ice Nine Publishing,1992)
[62] Gilmour

Some other scholars question the poetic status of the artist, not by scorning him as such but by providing a different perspective. Negus (who looks at Dylan as a cultural individual and gives an overall account of his work in terms of influences, chronology, lyrics and music)[63] and Marshall (who argues for Dylan's stardom and how it is through this that the songs gain meaning and affect his relationship with the audience, the press and the music industry)[64] both agree that even if Dylan's lyrics can in some ways be interpreted as poetry, they nevertheless remain the words of songs. As such, they suggest, they cannot be directly palpable if they are separated from the music and the performance. In Negus' words, the artist's lyrics '…are sung, used to convey sentiment, gesture and expression'.[65] Marshall agrees that as far as songs are concerned the meaning is formed mostly by the performer's delivery and not by the lyrics taken separately as poetry. Bob Dylan himself has never given a clear answer as to whether he thinks of himself as a poet or as a song-writer, and it is difficult to avoid the impression that he plays on the ambiguity of his position.

Day writes that 'the most important resistance in Dylan's lyrics is to the role now commonly ascribed to words written for singing.'[66] Drawing on Ezra Pound, he goes on to state that:

> there is a popular modern sense that the verbal semantics of a song will necessarily be less rich, the lexical textures less deeply conceived, than those of poetry; that music, to use Pound's terms, 'turns…words out of doors and strews them and distorts them to the tune, out of all recognition' as poetry…The distinctiveness of Dylan's achievement, however, is that for the greater part his lyrics transgress any ready distinction between a poetic richness of signification,

[63] Keith Negus, *Bob Dylan* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2008)
[64] Lee Marshall, *Bob Dylan: The Never Ending Star* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)
[65] Negus, 101
[66] Day (1988), p.3

> a density of verbal meaning, on the one hand, and performance as song, on the other.[67]

Consequently, we can say that Dylan's use of poetic lyrics has to be seen as a part of his song-writing, and not as poetry in its own right. His writing was influenced especially by blues and ballad traditions, as well as by the language of the Bible.[68] It was these influences that Dylan enriched with other elements to create an impressive art of lyric writing and, so Ricks argues, because he was 'unconscious of the subtle effects of wording and timing' and hence worked through his instinct, he can be considered as a genuine artist.[69]

Neither the scholars who acclaim the poetic status of Bob Dylan, nor the ones who doubt his status as a poet can disagree with the view that the lyrics represent one important element of Dylan's art, a medium for communicating his ideas. And the idea of 'salvation' and its associated concepts is relentlessly present in his lyrics, even though the word itself might not always appear as such. Bert Cartwright (cited also in Gilmour[70]) states: 'In his early songs of protest [Dylan] optimistically expressed a prophetic view of history in which an old order will fade, giving way to more just and righteous existence'.[71] He adds that after John Kennedy's assassination and the issue of good causes being corrupted, he became more pessimistic. Dylan's pessimistic view at that point can be linked with the Jewish world view as far as the utopian idea for a better world is concerned. Williamson connects Kennedy's assassination with the even more intense insistence of Dylan to avoid the 'Spokesman' label people were giving to him. He writes: 'If they could gun down the President in broad daylight, what might they do to the Voice Of A Generation as he stepped out of the stage door into some

[67] Day (1988), p.3
[68] Gray, p.392
[69] Ricks, p.7
[70] Gilmour, p.91
[71] Ibid, p.91

dark alley after a gig one night?'[72] Scaduto suggests that, despite the fact that Dylan denies the effect Kennedy's assassination had on him, many of the people who knew him back then felt that he was influenced by the incident.[73] However, Dylan's subsequent songs showed that the Jewish hope for 'history's fulfillment' had remained within him.[74] Dylan began his career by writing what were taken as protest songs, searching through his lyrics for social and political salvation. At this stage it is likely that Dylan felt that the 'utopian vision' could actually be realized in social and political terms, in the real world. The 'protest' period and association with the folk movement did not last long, however, and as Cartwright argues, succumbed to pessimism after Kennedy's assassination. The quest for salvation has remained, but has changed its form persistently ever since throughout his career, being searched for variously at different phases in relationships, within himself as an individual, and in religion through faith in a higher power.

'…play a song for me': Music as a means of expression

Nevertheless, even though the lyrics of the songs are undeniably important and have understandably become the main focus of most commentaries on his work, my position in this dissertation is that Dylan is first and foremost to be regarded as a songwriter. This means that the role of the music in his songs also needs to be given due attention here. Despite the fact that Dylan almost never spent much time on the composition of the music for a song, as he usually 'dashed off a tune', as Mike Marqusee tells us, and proceeded to record it without 'further ado'[75], music as melody, as rhythm, as harmony and as instrumentation needs to be taken seriously into consideration when commenting

[72] Nigel Williamson, *The Rough Guide to Bob Dylan* (London: Rough Guides, 2000), p.41
[73] Anthony Scaduto, *Bob Dylan* (London: Helter Skelter Publishing., 2001), p.161
[74] Cartwright, 121
[75] Marqusee, p.118: 'Mr. Tambourine Man' is an exemption to this rule, as the artist was working on its music for more than eight months before releasing one of its many versions.

on his songs. Some scholars are well aware of this, although the amount of information about the musical treatment of Dylan's songs is more limited in relation to the existing analyses of his lyrics. Negus, in the final chapter of his book *Bob Dylan* discusses the music and its significant role in the formation of the meaning of the songs. He refers separately to the use of pitch, melodic sequence, and rhythmic patterns. He provides examples in each case, but does not proceed by means of a traditional musicological analysis, unlike Everett[76] who, in his article 'Confessions from Blueberry Hell, or, Pitch Can Be a Sticky Substance', provides (along with similar treatment in other artists' work) an analytical description especially of the harmonic sequences of some Dylan songs, like 'Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You'. Another writer who provides an analytical approach to the music is Betsie Bowden who, in her book *Performed Literature: Words and Music by Bob Dylan*[77], agrees that lyrics alone cannot be used for a song analysis without the music and, importantly, the performance itself being taken into account. In Bowden's book many detailed analytical examples of Dylan's songs are provided.

Wilfrid Mellers in his book *A Darker Shade of Pale: A Backdrop to Bob Dylan* has written extensively about Bob Dylan's use of musical elements, in the first part of the book exploring the musical traditions that lie behind Dylan's art, while in the second giving broad musical analyses (without, however, providing notated examples) of his art during the years 1961-1981.[78] Mellers also examines songs from the albums *Street Legal*, *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved* (albums that date from the period when Dylan turned to Christianity) and offers a demonstration of the Christian and musical

[76] Walter Everett, 'Confessions from Blueberry Hell, or, Pitch Can Be a Sticky Substance' in *Expressions In Pop-Rock Music*, Walter Everett (ed.) (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000), pp.33-57

[77] Betsie Bowden, *Performed Literatured: Words and Music by Bob Dylan* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2001)

[78] Wilfrid Mellers, *A Darker Shade of Pale: A Backdrop to Bob Dylan* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1984)

elements of the songs in his article 'God, Modality and Meaning in Some Recent Songs of Bob Dylan'.[79] In his article 'Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation "All Along the Watchtower"' Albin J. Zak III provides an interesting comparative account of two versions of the same song, albeit on a limited scale, focusing on Dylan's musical treatment.[80] What all these cases serve to demonstrate, however, is that there are relatively few attempts in the literature on Dylan to examine the music in any detail, and that the reason for this is probably that Dylan's music is generally regarded as being of less importance than his lyrics. This even applies to musicological accounts of Dylan.

As far as the musicological analysis of popular music is concerned, Peter Wicke makes the observation that:

> Rock songs are not art songs, whose hidden meaning should be sought in their form and structure. It was only those people who believed they had to defend these songs against their real character as a popular art form who ever viewed them in this way.[81]

This is in certain respects a contradictory statement, however. I cannot fully support Wicke's argument not because I consider that the meaning of popular songs can be sought only in their form and structure, but because since the audience creates its own meaning from this type of song then all the elements that 'form' the song should be taken into consideration to explain the effect on the listener. I argue, therefore, that what is called for is not so much a musicological 'formal' analysis of elements like pitch, harmony, rhythm, and so on, in isolation, but instead something more like a

[79] Wilfrid Mellers, 'God, Modality and Meaning in Some Recent Songs of Bob Dylan' in *Popular Music*, 1 (1981), 143-157
[80] Albin J. Zak III, 'Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix: Juxtaposition and Transformation "All Along the Watchtower"' in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 57/3 (Autumn, 2004), 599-644
[81] Peter Wicke, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.24

comparative style analysis, emphasizing the use that Dylan makes of a range of style systems and musical traditions, each of which carries powerful meanings associated with its own community of listeners. What is important about the musical treatment of Dylan's songs, and is particularly stated by Mellers, is that he used the elements of both black and white folk and popular musics to create his own personal style; this was achieved by the way in which he absorbed and dealt with musical sources such as British ballads, cowboy and hillbilly songs, Negro holler and blues and black and white gospel music.[82] These musical sources have always been evident in his work, but his own musical 'style' never stayed the same. As Pareles observes, each of his stylistic shifts created new types of popular music, like folk rock and country rock.[83]

However, even though the music is characterized by perpetual stylistic change, it is safe to say that Dylan consistently uses such style changes to reinforce and communicate certain dominant ideas that run right through his work. As we argue here, central among these ideas is that of 'salvation', reinforced at one period by folk and protest music, at another by country music, and at another by gospel music. Added to this is also the instrumentation featured in his various bands – acoustic guitar and harmonica at one stage, electric rock band at another, country including slide guitar, and bands that acquired Spanish and Latin American musical character including violin at another. The bitter-sweet relation to salvation and redemption is brought out in these respects by Mellers' interpretation of 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands': 'The fade-out on the harmonica insists that Eden ought to be for ever; the melancholy springs from the fact that it isn't.'[84]

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[82] Mellers (1984), p.113, 121
[83] Jon Pareles, 'Bob Dylan' in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, vol.1, H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (ed.) (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1986), p.670
[84] Mellers (1984), p.149

Typical musicological approaches to popular music can turn out to be very useful, of course, although the use of musical notation is neither necessary nor always productive, because, as Poague notes, '[m]usical notation, which is the means of composition in the case of classical music, is of very little importance here. The finished artifact in popular music is not the published score but the commercial (or underground) recording'.[85] However, as Hubbs writes, even if musicological analyses of pop or rock songs are not necessary, a notated analysis of the songs can 'pursue meaningful illumination of musical issues'. She continues by saying that 'the challenge lies in rethinking, adapting, perhaps reinventing conventional notation and modes of graphic representation, for optimal transparency and illustrative effect.'[86] As we have seen earlier, Middleton disagrees with the use of conventional musicology in popular music analysis, as conventional musicology makes use of theoretical terms designed for classical music, and this can be restrictive when examining other traditions of music.[87] He proposes instead that other elements should become the focus of the analysis, as a kind of paralinguistics emphasising voice-quality, pitch-level, speed of enunciation, dialect pronunciations, details of emphasis, speech-rhythm and so on.[88] A range of primarily non-notational approaches is drawn on in this dissertation.

Giving life to words and music: the importance of performance

Bob Dylan is both lyricist and composer of the songs he performs but even though, in Scaduto's words, 'it was Dylan's work as a composer rather than performer, the

[85] Leland A. Poague, 'Performance Variables: Some Versions of Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe"' in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 13/3 (University of Illinois Press, July, 1979), p.82.
[86] Nadine Hubbs, 'Imagination of Pop-Rock Criticism' in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music*, Walter Everett (ed.), p.12
[87] Middleton, p.104
[88] Ibid, p.178

startling imagery of his writing that brought him his first wide audiences',[89] this view is not accepted by some later scholars. Marshall praises Dylan's significance as a performer in a book that studies the artist's status as a star. The author emphasizes that what gave Dylan his status is his vocal delivery and his live performances (of course nowhere in the book is Dylan's importance as a songwriter disputed). A commentary on Dylan's delivery is provided also by Negus, who discusses the changes in musical styles through which Dylan's voice goes. It is important to note here that his vocal delivery is commented on in almost every study of his work, starting from biographies (e.g. Scaduto), to general articles (Pareles[90]), to lyrical analyses (Ricks) – a fact that makes clearer the importance of performance itself as a fundamental factor in his music. One of the most important contributors to the understanding of Dylan as a performer is Paul Williams, who, in his books *Bob Dylan: Performing Artist: The Early Years 1960-1973*[91] and *Bob Dylan: Performing Artist: The Middle Years 1974-1986*[92] comments extensively on Dylan's performing art both on stage and in the recording studio. Dylan's biography by Robert Shelton provides, among interesting details about his life, information about and brief analyses of many songs in terms of musical genre, lyrics and performance styles.[93] The specific book is considered to be one of the more illuminative ones because during its preparation Dylan spoke extensively to Shelton, clarifying different issues concerning his life and, most importantly, his songs.

Dylan as a performer is considered to be unique and distinctive. His performance abilities and vocal delivery are personal in a way that implies that noone

[89] Scaduto, p.135
[90] Pareles, pp.669-671
[91] Paul Williams, *Bob Dylan: Performing Artist: The Early Years 1960-73* (London: Omnibus Press, 1994)
[92] Paul Williams, *Bob Dylan: Performing Artist: The Middle Years 1974-86* (London: Omnibus Press, 1994)
[93] Robert Shelton, *No Direction Home: The Life and Music of Bob Dylan* (London: New English Library), 1986

can sing his songs like he does. The strongly personal element that is so apparent in his performances brings to mind the Brechtian term *Gestus*, a term that I consider can be applied to Dylan in order to illuminate these aspects of his performance. Carl Weber defines *Gestus* as 'the total persona the actor creates on stage by way of his physical demeanour, facial expression, vocal utterances, costume and so forth.'[94] Though *Gestus* is a theatrical term used as acting technique derived from Brecht's 'epic theatre', it can be applied in this context, as it implies the personal engagement with a character which is being played, and, in many cases Dylan's performances can be seen as role acting while at the same time maintaining a certain ironic detachment. *Gestus* is also defined by Hiller as 'non-verbal expression', even if it might or might not be combined with speech, and it is interpreted as the device a character uses to convey his intent or emotion'.[95] In seeing Dylan as a performer from this perspective we can understand how he uses in his performances all the expressive devices of his body to convey his intentions, while also providing a highly personal character to his work. The essence of what is meant here by the term 'performance' in this special 'gestic' sense is its physicality and presence – what Barthes no doubt intended by his phrase 'the grain of the voice'.

Dylan's ability to rediscover the meaning of a song in different performances is emphasized by some of his commentators. Negus, for example, states that the recordings of Dylan's songs are the way they are caught at a specific time 'in the life of the song and its author'.[96] After all, Dylan has been continuously changing musical styles, and, as many of his songs are dealing with the issue of constant movement, it

[94] Carl Weber, 'Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble-the making of a model' in *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, Peter Thomson and Glendys Sacks (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.182
[95] Robert L. Hiller, 'The Symbolism of *Gestus* in Brecht's Drama' in *Myth and Symbol: Critical Approaches and Applications* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p.89
[96] Negus, p.3

may be assumed that change is an essential element of his world view as a person and an artist. Therefore, this constant reinterpretation of his songs can be linked to the everlasting search for salvation and fulfillment which simmers in his work. On the one hand Poague puts emphasis on Dylan's skill for reinterpretation by comparing three different versions of 'It Ain't Me, Babe', and on the other hand Betsie Bowden finds different meaning in six versions of the same song, something that made Alan Hoffman when reviewing the latter's book rather sceptical, as he states that 'It is more likely that Dylan occasionally took simple improvisational liberties with his studio originals, never realizing that anyone would make such a big deal about it'.[97] However, even if this is the case, and if Hoffman's scepticism is justified, it is still ultimately the listener's responsibility to interpret the song as she hears it, and scholars who study Dylan's songs are primarily, just like the rest of us, listeners to his work. Nevertheless, what we are listening to and interpreting is Dylan's presence as performer, a presence that survives even on record.

Traveling through musical styles: the importance of constant style-shifting

Having considered those aspects of Dylan's work that concern the elements of song creation, I should now like to return to the issue of style shifting and the relation to the 'search for salvation'. I suggest that the character of his song-writing changed whenever he changed his musical style. Dylan's constant style-shifting is important for a variety of reasons, first and foremost for the connection it might be considered to have with Dylan's perpetual search for salvation; he never seems to be reaching a musical place where he could stay, in the same way that he is always moving lyrically and personally in his effort to reach that desirable 'utopian' place where he can find

[97] Alan Hoffman, 'Review [Untitled]' in *Notes, Second Series*, 39/4 (June, 1983), p.849

peace and fulfilment. Thus, we find him travelling from the acoustic folk sounds of the early years (when his song-writing is mostly concerned with social issues), to the folk-rock sounds from 1965-66, before he 'disappeared', artistically speaking, after a motorcycle accident (he did, however, remain musically active, albeit away from the public view, and he did meet and do some sessions with The Band, recordings of which were released as *The Basement Tapes*). His official return to recording, *John Wesley Harding* (1968), came as a surprise, as it featured lyrics that were strongly biblical in character, and a much simpler instrumentation. Less than a year later he released the country album *Nashville Skyline*. The next three albums, *Self Portrait, Planet Waves*, and *Blood on the Tracks* return to the electric rock sound of his mid-1960s albums, and clearly feature blues-derived influences. In 1978 he released *Street Legal* which lyrically and musically connects the previous albums' content with the later albums of his 'Christian Period', when he added and combined gospel-derived music to his already extensive range of musical influences. After his gospel phase Dylan entered a period of creative struggle and difficulty, but the work of his 'Modern Era' has revealed some acclaimed albums, such as *Time Out of Mind*, *'Love and Theft'*[98] and *Modern Times*, in which he draws on the whole range of musical styles through which he had already travelled in the course of his musical development.[99]

In each musical style Dylan went through, he also carried elements of the previous styles he had traveled through. As I mentioned before, musical style shifting is not superficial in Dylan's case, but something fundamental for understanding his way of thinking. It can be regarded as being as important as his lyric writing. In many cases the emotions created by the words are inseparable from the music; this can be interpreted as Dylan's acknowledgment that each style carries different meaning and it

[98] The quotation marks used for the title of *'Love and Theft'* are deliberately placed by Dylan to comment on his own tendency to make explicit use of his work resources.
[99] A detailed discussion of Dylan's musical style-shifting can be found in Appendix I

represents a specific community of listeners.[100] As an artist of constant style-shifting he represents a man who also changes conceptual subjects in his art and he seems to always be able to place the world view of his songs in a suitable musical context. This can be assumed as to be the reason why his music has always been appreciated by numerous listeners of a range of musical styles, and also as the reason why one part of his audience – maybe the most devoted ones – seemed to feel betrayed at times because of the conversions he has been going through.

Audience

Since the concept of Dylan's audience has been raised at this point, it might be useful to make some important points here in this respect. It is commonly accepted that one inseparable factor for the understanding and 'analysis' of popular music is the effect this has on its audience. However, it can also be seen from the opposite perspective; from the perspective of the effects the audience's reaction to the music has on the artist. It has been mentioned at several points above that Dylan's key theme is the search for 'salvation', along with other related terms like 'redemption' and 'fulfillment'. In this way, when viewed through a more general prism, all artists might search for all the above in the relationship with their audiences, as it is the audience who can vindicate or scorn a creator.

According to Longhurst, Adorno's view is that the listeners to popular music are restrained by typified patterns of listening with music being just a sonic background to their everyday social life. Thus, according to this view, a popular music listener is passive, without critical thinking.[101] Of course, Adorno developed his views on popular music at the end of the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s. The period of music studied

[100] Max Paddison made this observation, commenting particularly on the songs of *Nashville Skyline*.
[101] Longhurst, p. 8

in this dissertation starts from the 1960s, with popular music having already met many transformations since the period of Adorno's first writings on jazz and hit songs. Later in his book *Popular Music and Society* Longhurst discusses the position of popular music audiences by stating that each listener can filter the messages acquired in the music by having different interpretations of songs, thus there is no specific message in a popular song which is interpreted in the same way by all the listeners. He disagrees with Adorno's view that popular music listeners are totally passive in their listening habits, allowing them a more critical and discriminating relationship to the music. He also comments on the more devout listeners, fans, who tend to become obsessed with a popular music idol.

Dylan's audience unquestionably has never been passive, and this is evident from the reception of the artist at every phase of his musical career. He always had people doubting him as well as people being obsessed with him.[102] As Marshall points out, the relation between Dylan and the audience has always been ambivalent from both sides. Just as his audiences were at times critical of him, so was Dylan just as critical of them. To emphasize this Marshall cites the examples of the years 1965-66 when the audience booed him for his electrified appearances and 1979 when his Christian music faced a similar reaction.[103] Negus compares two concerts where Dylan shows contrasting behaviour during his performances. On the one hand we have the intimacy, the direct communication with 'banters and jokes' of the Philharmonic Hall (New York) concert in 1964, and on the other hand we have the tension caused by the use of electric instruments apparent in the Manchester Free Trade Hall in 1966.[104] Of course, one can see the different behaviours of both the artist and the listeners in these different

[102] A typical example for this is the incident when A. J. Weberman was searching through Dylan's garbage to find any information he could about his hero (Poague, p.80)
[103] Marshall (2007), p.122
[104] Negus, p.1-2

contexts in terms of the musical style that was to be performed. On the one hand, the first case raised by Negus here is a concert where folk, acoustic music was to be performed; and this in a way demands a calm and relaxed attitude from both sides. On the other hand, the new electric folk-rock sound Dylan had invented and was going to perform in the latter case, apart from bringing negative reaction from his fans who considered him as to be their 'Spokesman' who had a specific musical style, it also – due to the loud sound and the intense rhythm – in some way demands a more energetic, even angrier, reaction from both the artist and audience.

Gray suggests that with his music and especially the constant style-shifting, Dylan demonstrates that if you don't try to please the audience but offer honestly the art that satisfies you, you give a new perspective to your listeners.[105] Dylan produced the music he wanted when he wanted, and he did not deliberately try to be heard. It was the audience's decision if they were to accept and respect his music – and they mostly did. Day argues that Dylan does not allow his audience to absorb the music easily. Relaxation is denied, since his work demands constant attention to the 'transactions' between the voice and words. Day suggests that, despite the fact that the voice speaks to the listener, the words do not allow themselves to be heard without thought, as it is through listening that the audience is invited to create a meaning.[106] As mentioned above, in *Chronicles I*, Bob Dylan confesses that the 'Spokesman' label he carried during the first years of his career has been something like a curse for him. He always attempted to be released from this tag but it seems that the audience would not permit this to happen. At several points in the book he indicates how often he and his family changed houses because of the annoyance caused either by his fans or the people who disagreed with him. What is evident is that Dylan wanted to acquire a personal life that

[105] Gray, p.121
[106] Day (1988), p.2

would be separate from his career; he wanted Bob Dylan to be appreciated as an artist and not as a public figure, and this is why for many years the relation with his audience had been at times intense and negative. Marshall sees the beginning of the Never Ending Tour in 1988 as the artist's attempt to redefine the relationship with his audience by visiting the same places and playing different set lists, often using different versions of the songs. With the Never Ending Tour he also approaches listeners of a younger age.

The important realization to be made, as far as Dylan's relationship with his audience is concerned, is one that has already been indicated earlier in the chapter; that Dylan, as Mark Blake says, 'consistently defied critics and devotees by making the music he wants when he wants'.[107] This, if seen from the perspective of Dylan's constant search for 'salvation', shows how he was also willing to move away – like he did with musical styles – from his audience in order to follow his need for change that would help him achieve to reach the desirable musical and, thus, spiritual place that can be again seen as 'utopia'.

Outline and Overview

As stated earlier, the aim of this dissertation is to examine the ways in which Dylan's constant search for salvation is revealed through his work and to consider the critical function of his utopian vision. This main aim and the central argument that accompanies it run right through my thesis. I will conclude the Introduction therefore with a brief summary of the structure of the dissertation by giving a concise account of the argument and dominant idea underlying each of the individual chapters.

[107] Blake, p.7

Chapter I deals with Dylan's vision of a perfect, flawless society. In his prolific output there are countless examples of man's longing for salvation on many different levels. The most profound is the longing for a saved society – we see this in the straight-forward songs with which he began his career and that point in this direction. To reiterate, from his first album *Bob Dylan* right up to *The Times they are a-Changin'* he produced protest songs that evoke the idea of, as Heine puts it, 'divine judgment and retribution'.[108] This aspect of his work has been mentioned above as part of his involvement in the folk movement and the political thinking associated with it. An important contributor to the emergence of Dylan's political and social consciousness and the person who encouraged him to express it through his songs was Suze Rotolo, with whom he had a relationship until 1964. The fact that Dylan has acknowledged the importance of her contribution contradicts the content of 'Hero Blues', a song probably written with this relationship in mind, and in the lyrics of which Dylan seems to resent the fact that he was pushed in such a direction.[109] Dylan continued to attack what he saw as the corrupted system of the society in which he lived even after he turned away from the folk movement and adopted the line-up of the amplified rock band. Throughout the whole corpus of his work there are numerous examples of his disappointment with the system and with those in authority on the one hand, and on the other his many visions of an imaginative new society freed from ills, a society that resembles an Edenic condition, a perfect place where every individual will be free and fairly treated. I argue, as stated at the outset, that it is the tension between utopian vision and the world as it is that provides Dylan's songs with their critical edge.

In Chapter II, I discuss how the central pursuit of a sense of personal salvation is also applied throughout Dylan's work, whether this implies finding one's self-

[108] Heine, p.109
[109] Polizzotti, p.16

knowledge or finding atonement for failings. The necessity for individual fulfillment can be sometimes linked to the notion of social salvation, as indicated above; as Andy Gill suggests, after the turn away from protest song and overt social commentary Dylan 'had realized social liberation could only grow out of personal liberation'.[110] One useful source that deals specifically with the theme of identity in Dylan's art, without looking at aspects of the artist's biography, is Aidan Day's *Jokerman*.[111] I decided to link the issue of drugs (either as usage or as mentioned in songs) to Dylan's songs that deal with the salvation of the individual because, as Mellers argues, the songwriter turned to them not as escape but in an attempt to reveal depths and heights, while the writer underlines his opinion by placing Dylan's turn to drugs at the point where he rejected the folk tradition and engaged a rock band.[112] Mellers suggests that Dylan's heavy drug use, especially LSD, during the time he composed and recorded the album *Blonde on Blonde* might have occurred as an attempt at searching for his inner identity.[113]

Chapter III addresses salvation through personal relationships in Dylan. It is normal, of course, for public figures, especially popular artists to have the spotlight constantly on their personal lives. Dylan could not be treated differently. Scaduto emphasizes the early affair Dylan and Suze Rotolo had, with her being an inspiration for many of his songs as well as a guide for the emergence of Dylan's social and artistic conscience. He also examines the performer's relationship with Joan Baez, with the latter being interviewed for his book. Williamson supports Scaduto's arguments regarding the importance of Rotolo in Dylan's life and work, but he also underlines the probability that Dylan in some way used Joan Baez to get access to bigger audiences

[110] Gill, p.86
[111] Day (1988)
[112] Mellers (1984), p.141
[113] Ibid, p.143

and to increase his own fame. Nevertheless, Williamson regards Baez as the subject matter of some songs like 'She Belongs To Me' and 'Queen Jane Approximately'.

But it was Sarah Lowndes (Shirley Nozniski) who would be the key figure in Dylan's life. A lot of references to Sarah are evident in Dylan's *Chronicles I* and Sarah is a frequent presence in his song writing (even though his songs are rarely autobiographical). Despite his being a proper family man, as Pichaske states, supporting his argument with lyrics from 'New Morning',[114] he simultaneously kept being unfaithful. Pichaske reads the song 'Dirge' as a song of guilt for an extramarital relationship. Williamson expands this view by maintaining that one of the divorce's causes was the star's affair with the groupie Ellen Bernstein. Lucy O' Brien cites some of the women in Dylan's life and gives detailed descriptions of his relationships to them.[115] From my point of view the exploration of Dylan's love past is not of overt significance in itself, but when it comes to key features that influenced and inspired his songs, then some women must be considered as 'contributors' to the resulting work. All the sources agree that, even if Dylan never wrote autobiographical songs, the album *Blood on the Tracks* almost explicitly refers to Sarah. During the divorce case, as Gray maintains, Dylan felt betrayed by Sarah and this is why he craved for salvation in Christianity, by abandoning the search for salvation through the relationships with the opposite sex, a concept that came to an apogee with the albums *Blood on the Tracks* and *Desire.* However, the idea of salvation through a love relationship is spread throughout Dylan's work, either as something unattainable or as something possible, ever since the songs of his early years.

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[114] David R. Pichaske, 'Dylan and Minnesota Place in an Era of Virtual Reality' in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (May: 2009), pp.147-165
'Build me a cabin in Utah/ Marry me a wife, catch a rainbow trout/ Have a bunch of kids who call me "Pa"/ That must be what it's all about', p.158

[115] Lucy O' Brien, 'Just Like a Woman' in *Bob Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Back Pages* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), pp.68-73

Chapter IV takes the search for salvation to a further level in Dylan's work – the quest for the 'perfect place'. The search for 'salvation' can be described as the effort to 'reach' a place, either in physical or in mental terms, where someone will find peace and happiness and reach individual fulfilment. In his work, Dylan, has always used the elements of continuous movement, and never seemed to stay in one place for long. Pichaske shows Dylan's preference for the Mid-Western locations with which the artist identifies; the country-side, as opposed to the cities, is the place for 'restoration and grace'. The writer underlines how in Dylan's work even the good women, those who offer 'redemption and not damnation' are linked with the countryside. Nevertheless, Pichaske does not ignore Dylan's awareness of nature's dangers and the venomousness that can be encountered in some Mid-Western people.[116] Morris, in an article where he introduces the notion of 'chora', challenges us to consider Dylan's journey towards a 'home', a perpetual spiritual movement towards 'resolution' that may be unattainable. The writer suggests that Dylan's 'direction home' of the three albums *Time Out of Mind, 'Love and Theft'* and *Modern Times* is death.[117] Another contributor to the exploration of the ways in which Dylan uses the notion of place, distance and continuous movement is Smart, in his article 'Nothing but Affection for All Those who've Sailed with me: Bob Dylan from Place to Place'.[118] In this chapter I discuss Dylan's treatment of the notion of the perfect place which can offer salvation as an earthly location which can be reached or not, or an unearthly mental place which someone might be longing for. In any case this location can be seen as a place of Utopia.

[116] Pichaske (2009), pp.147-165
[117] Robin A. Morris, 'A Place that you can call home' in *Popular Music and Society* 32/2, (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, May, 2009), pp.167-177
[118] Nick Smart, 'Nothing But Affection for All Those who've Sailed with me: Bob Dylan from Place to Place' in *Popular Music and Society* 32/2, (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, May, 2009), pp.179-197

In Conclusion

It is clear that for us to gain a critical view of the work of Dylan many different and contradictory aspects of it must be taken in account. We have seen the problems raised by a literary approach to the topics of his lyrics, music and the performance of them. For a study of Dylan's art the information about these three aspects has to be studied separately and then be recombined. The different approaches to the various styles of Dylan's development should be treated likewise and be associated with biographical references (only when necessary) as well as descriptions of the general situation of popular music in each phase. An important issue that should also be taken into consideration is Dylan's relation with the audience. I have offered some commentary on the ambivalent relation of the artist with his audience, a matter of a great importance for the interpretation of the meaning of Dylan's work.

In this Introduction I have also reviewed the literature on Dylan, including his relationships with women and the use of these experiences as a topic for his songs, as well as the effect that soft and hard drugs had on his work, especially during the years 1963-66. I have tried to connect the above with a sense of Dylan's perpetual search for salvation that I argue underlies the whole corpus of his work, and I have related this also to his handling of the concepts of religiosity and also the concepts of place, home and movement, all of which will be further explored in the individual chapters that follow. This Introduction therefore provides a framework and a foundation for the rest of this project.

Chapter I

‘The Times they are a-Changing’: Dreaming of Social and Political Salvation

As has already been discussed, Bob Dylan was initially regarded as the major artist of the ‘protest movement’ of the early 1960s. His first audiences linked him initially with the political left and its manifestations in the folk movement of that time. Indeed, in his songs Dylan does offer social and political commentary on the problems of the period, but not in the way he was generally regarded as doing in the early years of his career. His work undoubtedly calls for a world where righteousness and justice prevail, a world that can be delivered from destruction and evil, a world that can approach salvation through the actions of both individuals and of governments. But it could be said that salvation of this kind cannot be achieved in this world, no matter how strong the call for it might be. Nevertheless, if this were all that Dylan is claiming, then it might appear to be stating the obvious. However, it is the argument of this dissertation that the utopian vision of Dylan’s songs has a strongly critical and moral function. In Dylan’s songs the utopian request for a flawless society always collides with the realistic knowledge of the gulf between the image of the perfect world and the actual world which we inhabit. This stance taken by Dylan also coincides with Fátima Vieira’s description of Utopia: ‘Utopia is then to be seen as a matter of attitude, as a kind of reaction to an undesirable present and an aspiration to overcome all difficulties by the imagination of possible

alternatives.'[1] Thomas More was making this claim in *Utopia*, brought to the fore by David Harvey: 'More's aim, and this is characteristic, was social harmony and stability'.[2] While this is a common longing amongst people, it is realistically not considered as possible; Ben Anderson comments on Levitas' idea of utopia, which is to be a 'blue-print of a good but non-existent and therefore impossible society'.[3] Adorno gives an explanation for the unattainability of 'utopia' in social terms in a discussion between himself and Ersnt Bloch, by stating that people, when having utopian thoughts about society, hope that

> not only could they live without hunger and probably without anxiety, but they could also live as free human beings. At the same time, the social apparatus has hardened itself against people, and thus, whatever appears before their eyes all over the world as attainable possibility, as the evident possibility of fulfillment, presents itself to them as radically impossible.[4]

And it is in this framework that Dylan's songs of social context function. By commenting on every kind of social and political authority, the songs present the utopian idea of the world, as opposed to the pessimistic view of the world as it is.

In the 1960s the United States was facing many changes and upheavals. Not least among these was the development at political, legal and social levels[5] of the fight for racial equality. Black people were struggling to achieve a better place in society, and,

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[1] Fátima Vieira, 'The Concept of Utopia' in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Gregory Claeys (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.7
[2] David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p.159
[3] Ben Anderson, 'A Principle of Hope: Recorded Music, Listening Practices and the Immanence of Utopia' in *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* (84/3,4, Special Issue: The Dialectics of Utopia and Dystopia, 2002), pp.211-227
[4] Bloch (1989), p.4
[5] James Seay Brown Jr. and David J. Gillespe, 'From Idealism to Counter-Culture: On Teaching a Course on the 60s' in *Improving College and University Teaching*, 25/1 (Winter, 1977), p.36

helped by white activists, they seemed to come closer to the achievement of their goals, even if the difficulties were overwhelming. In the meantime, the movement for women's rights was growing and people also started to be interested in the protection of the environment. Nonetheless, while the vision of a fair and just world was a powerful ideal for the 'youth culture' of the time, the economic and political situation of the country was fundamentally affected by the Vietnam War and the various covert wars around the world in which America was involved.[6] All this provided potent material for Dylan's work at this period. As Marqusee puts it: 'Few ages of social change have been as well-served artistically as the American 60s were by Dylan.'[7] However, the way Dylan comments politically through his songs goes beyond the notion of the protest song to become something more universal and even philosophical. Wilfrid Mellers gives a concise definition of the way Dylan writes what his audience of the time interpreted as protest songs: 'He began, of course, as a creator of protest songs; what has become evident through the years is that this protest is not to be construed in narrowly political terms but is rather an intuitive reassessment of philosophical as well as social values.'[8] In other words, the 'intuitive' and idiosyncratic approach that is so characteristic of Dylan's work is precisely what distinguishes it from what was generally regarded as protest songs at this period.

For an artist not to be influenced by the shifts taking place in the social, political and historical context within which he lives would, of course, be odd. What made this particular songwriter stand out as the major representative of what the whole society was experiencing was the way he situated himself – that is to say, situated the *personal* – in

[6] Ibid.
[7] Marqusee, p.4
[8] Mellers (1984), p.146

his work. Dylan was successfully voicing the world view of the generation that was involved with the folk movement, even though his actual involvement with the movement was ambivalent.[9] Dylan's approach to what can be called 'protest' songs reflects the subsequent changes of the work of many representatives of the folk revival, which was to bring about the expression of social justice through an evocation of personal experience, rather than through the expression of a collective message.[10] The evocation of the personal is the reason for the consideration of Dylan as the major representative of the folk movement's ideology. Dylan's political and social songs were not only written lyrically and musically as to be stating his personal stance towards what was going on in the world, but they were also performed in personal way. Hence, since Dylan was honestly expressing the world view of his generation in such an honest way, the fact that many people were identifying with him should not be surprising. When he wrote 'Blowin' in the wind', Dylan expressed his generation's longing for a possible answer that could improve society, and this is why the song became the anthem of the folk movement generation. 'Blowin' in the Wind' is the song with which I will begin the discussion of this chapter, which will be dealing with Dylan's search for salvation and will see how some songs show that this kind of salvation might not be attainable. I will discuss Dylan's position which seems to have at some points a pessimistic character and at some others ironic, in order to point to the authorities as the greater ill of the society and comment on how a perfect society – if it can exist – could be achieved.

[9] Marshall (2007), p.61
[10] Ibid, p.67

'…blowin' in the wind': Searching for a possible answer

It is tempting to say that the search for a politically and socially atoned culture characterizes Dylan's entire work. However, not all of his songs seem to arrive at the perfect image of a redeemed society. In some cases there is the hope of finding the means to arrive, in others this does not seem possible, while there are some songs that make it obvious that salvation is near. This is especially the case in the early songs, where he seems ambivalent as to whether salvation could be attained for a society which he consistently pictures as corrupted – drawing as he so often does on the religious and moral language of the early settlers and of the King James I version of the bible.[11] This is evident even in the song that established him in the collective consciousness of the era, 'Blowin' in the Wind'. To illustrate these points I shall consider this song, and also another from Dylan's second album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, 'A Hard Rain's a-gonna fall'.

Throughout the lyrics of 'Blowin' in the Wind' meaningful questions are being posed, all of them leading our thinking towards the idea of a fair society. However, no specific answers are offered, only the hovering suggestion that an answer might exist somewhere. The lyrics are contradictory, in the sense that clear and specific questions oppose the unspecific answer. The melody of the song is drawn from the slave song 'No More Auction Block'.[12] Even though the song, which was taken up as the anthem of the folk movement, is musically impressively simple, consisting of only three chords, at the same time it is also impressively complex in terms of the imagery presented in the lyrics.

[11] Gilmour, p.20: the writer identifies some exceptions for this, referring also to Cartwright's claim that Dylan was not bound to the specific translation of the Bible, while he also points to Gray's argument that he actually was.
[12] Williamson, p.30

On *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* performance of the song, the last word of the lyrics seems to be delivered in an unsettled way, giving the sense that the last 'blowing in the wind' is not actually an answer, but an extension of the main question of the song. Instead, the 'answer' of the song is given by the harmonica conclusion. The impact of the harmonica effect in 'Blowin' in the Wind' is pointed out by Appleby, who states that the harmonica solos are rhythmically more free than the vocal sections and the guitar playing, providing a notable contrast,[13] and of course the sense of freedom from the pessimistic lyrics. 'How many deaths will it take till he knows/that too many people have died?' and 'How many years must some people exist/before they're allowed to be free?' are two of the questions that depict the difficulty of getting to the ideal deliverance. It is realistic that no specific answer can be given to such questions. The answer might be 'blowin' in the wind' but people might never be able to see and seize it.

'Blowing in the Wind' and, likewise, the next song I shall discuss, 'A hard rain's a-gonna fall', are included, as already indicated, in his second album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. The release of the album had been a revelation for his status as a lyricist, as his talent for oracular imagery and surreal narrative became explicitly evident.[14] Indeed, Pareles argues that due to the strength of the lyrics and the simple musical accompaniment of his early songs, there have been many cases when Dylan's lyrics overshadow his music.[15]

'A hard rain's a-gonna fall' is a song full of terror and anxiety. The melody and the words of the refrain ('O where have you been…young one?') are derived from 'Lord

[13] Amy Appleby, *The Harp Styles of Bob Dylan* (New York: Amsco Publications, 1992), p.6
[14] Pareles, (1986), p.669
[15] Ibid, p.670

Randall', a traditional English song.[16] Ricks states that in this single piece the artist tries to insert all the situations of the world that scare him, creating a hell on earth.[17] The lines do not seem to have a narrative coherence, but this is something that contributes to the tension the song provokes. But, whereas the images he creates with his lyrics are overwhelming for the listener, 'Hard Rain' cannot be considered a complicated song. Paul Williams observes that the song is actually a list of where the son has been, what he has seen and heard, who he has met and what he plans to do,[18] as each one of these is the theme of each stanza. Dylan gives each stanza a different mood, being hopeful at one point, desperate at another, sad and angry at others[19]. In any case, the listener cannot be relieved, as she cannot settle in any specific feeling, whether good or bad, remaining in a state of emotional oscillation until the song finishes. Nevertheless, the most prominent element of the song is its threatening mood, achieved mainly not from the effect of the words, but from the performance, especially the way Dylan repeats the phrase 'hard rain' in the choruses[20]. As already indicated, Dylan always could bring further to the fore what was stated in his songs by the way he approached them as a performer. The distinctively personal performances of Dylan bring to mind the Brechtian term *Gestus*. It is a term mostly used for acting, but it can also be applied in this context. Carl Weber defines *Gestus*

> …as the total process, the 'ensemble' of all physical behavior the actor displays when showing us a 'character' on stage by way of his/her social interaction. It is an ensemble of the body and its movements and gestures, the face and its mimetic

[16] Gray, p.122
[17] Ricks (2004), p.343.
[18] Williams (i), p.59
[19] Mellers (1984), p.132
[20] Williams(i) (1991), p.61

> expressions, the voice and its sounds and inflections, speech with its patterns and rhythms…[21]

Weber's view is supportive to Hiller's interpretation of *Gestus* as 'the manner in which a character conveys his intent or emotion'.[22]

Due to the Cuban missile crisis taking place during the period the song was written and released, one might consider that the fear of a nuclear fall-out could have been the inspiration for 'A hard rain's a-gonna fall'. Dylan rejects any such interpretation, as the first appearance of the song came before the Cuban missile crisis. Instead, Scaduto is citing Dylan as saying about this song: 'The hard rain that's gonna fall is in the last verse, where I say the "pellets of poison are flooding us all", I mean all the lies that people are told on their radios and in the newspapers, trying to take people's brains away, all the lies I consider poison'.[23]

Although a first hearing of the song might provoke the assumption that the notion of redemption is irrelevant, given its prevailing mood**,** I consider that hope for the world's salvation is latent in such moments as the image of a rainbow given to the son by a young girl, an image that implies a sense of hope in this – otherwise terrifying – hillbilly waltz, giving the audience the hint that the key for salvation might be not, as Mellers suggests, unattainable[24], even though the monotonous repetition of the music and the feeling of the vocal delivery provoke the sense that the world is going nowhere better. The element of hope and the factor of the wishful thinking are both central aspects of utopian thought. These are going to be further discussed in a later part of this dissertation.

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[21] Carl Weber, 'Brecht's Concept of *Gestus* and the American performance tradition' in *Brecht Sourcebook*, Carol Martin and Henry Bial (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2005), p.43
[22] Hiller, p.89
[23] Scaduto, p.127
[24] Mellers (1984), p.132

Both ‘Blowin’ in the Wind’ and ‘A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall’ are examples of Dylan’s habit of using images of nature in his songs to powerful emotional effect; Negus argues that this is noticeable throughout his work, showing the big influence the natural environment has had on him[25]. Nature, as we shall see, can appear sometimes as supportive and consoling and sometimes as destructive and hostile in the way it is employed by Dylan in his lyrics. This duality can be understood as an aspect of the pervading tension in Dylans’s work between the utopian and the destructiveness of the world as it is. Indeed, as Anderson writes: ‘Common to each understanding is the assumption that utopia invariably comes into being (either figuratively or actually) through its qualitative difference in kind from a non-utopian present’.[26]

‘There is no Sense in Trying’: The Sound of Hopelessness

It is not rare for Bob Dylan to premise his pessimistic thoughts about the world and create work in which no hope for an improvement of the society can be revealed. In the next song I will comment on how injustice and unfairness seem to be the main components of the world in Dylan’s songs. For Dylan, the harm that derives from injustice can be irreversible, with no possible atonement. The murder of the Afro-American Medgar Evers by a white man was the inspiration for ‘Only a Pawn in Their Game’.[27] No more than a month after the murder, in the summer of 1963, the songwriter was singing the song before an audience mostly made up of black people from Mississippi. However, as

[25] Negus, p.13
[26] Anderson, p.212
[27] McGregor, ‘Northern Folk Singers help out at Negro Festival in Mississippi’ in *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, p.14: Medgar W. Evers was the Field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and he was slain in Jackson, Mississippi in June 1963. Byron de La Beckwith, a Greenwood man, was indicted in the shooting.

Ricks states, Dylan did not hesitate in this context to sing the provocative line of the song 'But he can't be blamed'[28], implying that the murderer, as Robert Shelton puts it, had been 'brainwashed' and was not responsible for his actions, thereby making a statement against the 'divide and conquer' politics of the time that kept poor white Americans as suppressed as black Americans[29]. 'Only a Pawn in Their Game' is sung in the third person, having a direct finger-pointing character that associates it with the songs of the folk revival – one of the major features that such songs share is the absence of the singer's personal involvement in the story.[30] As Marshall has argued, the folk singer takes the role of a narrator and not of a contributor to the facts he describes.[31] 'Only a Pawn in their Game' is one of the few Dylan's songs that follow a particular narrative structure. Dylan sings it in a forceful way and keeps the guitar playing simple and effective. It is common for the politically meaningful songs of the early years of Dylan's career to have a tempo for the delivery of the lyrics that is distinctively different from the simple, supporting character of the tempo of the melodic and harmonic rhythms. This combination creates the same kind of effect as is to be found in operatic recitative.[32]

As the song unfolds the listener realizes that the murderer is never at any point referred to by name, as, in Ricks' view, he is obviously considered insignificant and meaningless as an individual.[33] Williams goes further to suggest that the murderer represents a stratum of the society that is so manipulated that such people cannot be

[28] Ricks, p.171
[29] Shelton, p.214
[30] Marshall (2007), p.32
[31] Ibid, p.32: in opposition to this, a blues singer is not singing something *to* somebody, she does not recognize any audience. Blues songs are 'self-representive', they represent the experience of the singer herself. (The reason I add this note is because Dylan is influenced from folk tradition but also from blues tradition, so he doesn't keep a straight line of his position in the songs, especially during the first years of his career. He is found as a narrator in some occasions, as present in the story in others.)
[32] Middleton, p.229
[33] Ricks, p.175

blamed, not even for this ultimate sin, murder.[34] The song implies that since the murderer had no consciousness of his action then he should be forgiven.[35] The concepts of victim and victimizer are blurred, so that the murderer also becomes a victim in his turn. In the utopian world Dylan envisages, incidents of the actual world like the one described in the song would never happen. In fact, as Levitas puts it straightforwardly, 'Utopia is about how we would live and what kind of a world we would live in if we could do just that.'[36] By using the murder of a black person as a reference point, Dylan grasps the opportunity to attack the politics of the era and to point towards the main causes of the problem which are obviously, as Shelton points out, the power alliances that encouraged the perpetuation of racial segregation and oppression.[37] Dylan seems to take the victimizer's side, something that allows him to give a strong explanation of the situation in a way that might appear perverse, but which also compels us to confront the system in which such things can happen.[38] Nevertheless, Medgar Evers is dead, and since the murderer is not the one to be punished, nowhere can justice be found, and no resolution is in sight.

'Ballad of Hollis Brown' is one of Dylan's songs that lead to no deliverance, but in a different way than 'Only a Pawn in their Game'. It is a story about a farmer who, driven from poverty, murders his whole family and then commits suicide. What is depicted in the song is the sad human situation. It speaks of poverty and difficult times without giving any glimpse of hope, as is indicated with lines like 'your empty pockets tell you that you ain't got no friend'.[39] The story is told in a straightforward linear

[34] Williams (i), p.88
[35] McGregor, p.15
[36] Levitas, p.1
[37] Shelton, p. 214.
[38] Williams (i), p.89
[39] Ibid, p.87

structure, but, in Mellers's words, 'the literary form turns out, as with 'Talkin' New York', to be circular. Past and present tenses are confused…'[40]; it conveys a situation from which the people involved cannot escape. This awareness is also underlined by the musical stability within the song, where nothing happens musically, and which implies that nothing stops, no matter how negatively things evolve.[41] The harmony of the song is meagre, as it is based on a guitar ostinato that moves from the tonic to the dominant, while the melody of the song is constructed of only four pitches in the middle register. According to Williams, the sound of the performance (voice, guitar and harmonica) gives a sense of loneliness, emptiness and nothing to believe in. Dylan sings about futility in everything (the protagonist's self, the lessons he has been taught, heroes, bravery).[42] Williams also suggests that the fact that in the singing voice we never hear a sign of anger leaves the tension created by the situation described in the lyrics unrelieved.[43] The audience is left with the problem of creating a message and a moral out of the song. 'There's seven people dead/On a South Dakota farm/ There's seven people dead/On a South Dakota farm/Somewhere in the distance/There's seven new people born'. The concept of salvation remains ambivalent in 'Ballad of Hollis Brown' until the end as, even though seven new people are born while seven others are dying, it is not clear if this is a sign of hope or a hint that, as Shelton sees it, seven more people will face the same problems in the future.[44] In Williams's opinion the fact that 'there's seven new people

[40] Mellers (1984), p. 125
[41] Ibid, p. 125
[42] Williams (i), p.88
[43] Ibid, p.88
[44] Shelton, p.213

born' somewhere is not good or bad, it's just a fact,[45] a reminder that life continues to evolve despite any individual's difficulties.

Obviously, social injustice in the sense of class discrimination is something that touches Dylan very deeply. Likewise, social injustice, but this time in the sense of racial discrimination, is his main concern in 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll', a song based on a true story that took place in February 1962 in Baltimore, when a waitress, aged 51, was killed by 24-year old William Zantzinger because she was late to serve his drink. She died the next day in hospital with a brain hemorrhage. The murderer was arrested and was given a six-month imprisonment, but with the accusation of manslaughter instead of murder.[46] Nowhere in the song are the skin-colors of the main characters mentioned. However, as Ricks observes, there is through the song an indirect allusion to concepts of 'white upon black, man upon woman, rich upon poor, young upon old'.[47] The verse form of the song is borrowed from Bertolt Brecht's *The Black Freighter*[48] while the fact that the verse structure varies, with the stanzas having different numbers of lines, creates the sense of suspense.[49] Key moments of the narration are intensified by the singer's stutters, pauses and accelerations. Marshall suggests that the song's direction shows that the real tragedy is not the injustice of the judge but the death of Hattie Carroll who made some children orphans,[50] a fact that is final, leading to no relief. On the other hand, Gilmour argues that since justice was not applied and the

[45] Williams (i), p.88
[46] Williamson, p. 262
[47] Ricks, p.231
[48] Williamson, p.262: while Brecht is confirmed as a source for the verse form by Dylan himself in *Biograph*, he explained to Robert Shelton in an interview that the verse form was borrowed from François Villon (Shelton, p. 214-5)
[49] Marqusee, p.83
[50] Marshall (2007), p. 72

murderer was not punished for the crime, no relief is probable.[51] Williams observes that in this song Dylan sings a memorial for Hattie Carroll, shows his scorn for William Zantzinger, accuses the court of hypocrisy, and shows his disdain for the people who, even though claiming to be on the right side, don't really care about people involved in unjust situations.[52] Indeed, the latter seem to have a more tragic role in this context as, if they do not change their attitude, society cannot be saved.

All in all, the three songs mentioned in this section convey Dylan's acknowledgement of the actual world's situation and the fact that this situation is unlikely to be improved. In this way he seems to be opposing his own utopian view of a better world.

Social salvation will bring no atonement to the unrighteous

Not all of the songs of *The Times they are a-Changin'* share the pessimistic view of the possibility of social and political salvation we encounter in 'Ballad of Hollis Brown' and 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll'. The next song to be considered, 'When the ship comes in', looks for utopian developments in socio-political terms that, as Gray suggests, are more unspecific and symbolic.[53] The effect of the image of the 'ship' is really very important in this context because, as Shelton points out, it is a symbol universally connected with the sense of salvation.[54] According to Mellers, the song could be understood as political or apocalyptic, but it does not have a fearful or negative backdrop due to the diatonic melody and the optimistic rhythm. Indeed, the way the song is

[51] Gilmour, p.72
[52] Williams (i), p.93
[53] Gray, p. 131
[54] Shelton, p.214

musically delivered with the flexible repeated notes and its march-like melody, arouses a positive emotion. It calls to mind the idea of a new start, a rebirth.[55]

'Oh the foes will rise/With sleep still in their eyes/And they'll jerk from their beds and think they're dreamin'/But they'll pinch themselves and squeal/And know that it's for real/The hour when the ship comes in'. These words of the penultimate stanza may seem threatening, but they are delivered with a calm cheerfulness. According to Mellers, this mood of the stanza directs us towards something more than just a social metamorphosis,[56] and maybe even towards an apocalyptic, final punishment of the unrighteous. The references to Pharaoh and Goliath in the last stanza of the song – historical or mythical figures who both fought with people who were less powerful and who both were unexpectedly defeated – offers, according to Gilmour, a hopeful message for the defenseless.[57] Unrighteous people are not permitted to enter the ship; even though they are saying 'we'll meet all your demands', they are left to drown in the tide. Specifically, as Williams puts it, Dylan speaks about the salvation of the righteous, the chosen people who will win over the unrighteous,[58] but with no hint of Christian feeling, as the unrighteous are refused any opportunity of atonement. At this stage Dylan's biblical imagery is distinctly Old Testament in its unforgiving tone, in stark contrast to his later 'Christian' period, with its strongly redemptive character.

Dylan's Jewish background, as has been clamed from many writers on him[59], is evident in his work, especially in the early songs of social content. As Spargo and Ream

[55] Mellers (1984), p.131
[56] Ibid, p.131
[57] Gilmour, p.75
[58] Williams (i), p.92
[59] Marqusee, p.171; Gilmour, p.12; Spargo and Ream, pp.87-93; Negus, pp.10-12; Heine, pp.35-39; Gray, p.566; et al.

suggest, Dylan's first references to religious salvation had a point of view reminiscent of Hebrew prophets, and they mostly had a resonance of discontentedness.[60] This position appears in early songs like 'When the ship comes in' and, as we shall see, 'Masters of War' where Dylan refuses atonement to the unrighteous, harmful people, the head of authorities who, through their actions, damaged the society. The songs of these years might have had a secular character, as far as their sociopolitical direction is concerned, but they approached this issue from, in Spargo and Ream's words, a 'prophetic rancor, sounded in Dylan's compact phrases or the sharpening notes of his esoteric inflections' .[61] According to Heine, Dylan in these songs is showing his belief that a higher power is the only possibility for offering retribution to the people who are not compatible with the highest moral standards;[62] of course, due to the vengeful character of these songs, retribution is denied. At the same time, Heine argues that Dylan, through his songwriting, is also committed to Zen ideology, as he 'rejected any and all symbols of authority that might obstruct his dedicated pursuit of authenticity and autonomy, which is realized during key moments of Zen-like detachment and compassion.'[63]

To give another example: the victimizers of society are also refused the opportunity to be saved in 'Masters of War', released on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*. Here, Dylan does not only express his fears for nuclear annihilation, but he also points directly at the people who are responsible for the world's ills: the 'masters of war', the ones who build only to destroy and earn money from war and destruction.[64] This dislike

[60] Spargo and Ream, p.88
[61] Ibid, p.89
[62] Heine, p.12
[63] Ibid
[64] Tor Egil Førland, 'Bringing it All Back Home or Another Side of Bob Dylan: Midwestern Isolationist' in *Journal of American Studies*, 26/3 (December 1992), p.340

of power structures at every level is an element that is frequently apparent in his songs.[65] As Marqusee points out, this particular song is finger-pointing, but cannot be simply aligned with the civil rights movements of the first half of the 1960s,[66] as it is uncompromisingly full of hatred towards its targets. It rejects, as Williams states, forgiveness, and even asks explicitly for the death of the unrighteous,[67] as he sings in the last stanza: 'And I hope that you die/And your death'll come soon'. The song presents us with an example where a songwriter combines riff repetition with other techniques. Richard Middleton writes that 'Masters of War' features 'a discursively constructed vocal – derived from white "folk" traditions – with phrase repetition, sequence and phrase-structure repetition is accompanied by a relentlessly repeated guitar riff".[68] Mellers argues that the advantage of the simple musical effect in this case is that it safeguards the intensity of the words from degenerating towards a feeling of hysteria.[69] However, even the simple guitar ostinato conveys a sense of threat when heard along with the harsh and scornful effects of Dylan's vocal delivery. The criminals, compared in the song to Judas Iscariot, find it impossible to achieve salvation, as, since not even Jesus would ever forgive their shameful actions, there is no one who could grant them forgiveness.[70] Williams argues that Jesus in this context, as well as in 'With God on Our Side', is not used as a spiritual figure, but rather as the mythical truth-telling figure of a teacher who was persecuted.[71] However, Jesus in this context, as stated above, can also be seen as a symbol of Justice, as he is a figure who has the ability to forgive or to condemn someone,

[65] Polizzotti, p.13
[66] Marqusee, p. 70
[67] Williams (i), p.76
[68] Middleton, p.281: Riff repetition is a technique that derived from rhythm and blues, was adopted in the rock and roll tradition and spread to rock music.
[69] Mellers (1984), p.126
[70] Gilmour, p.30
[71] Williams, (i), p.70

by using fair judgments. What we will see next in this chapter is Dylan's awareness that Justice is not always fair.

'…his Case it is Sealed': When Justice is Unfair where can People Turn?

Dylan takes the position that the political authority represented by the 'masters of war' and the complicity of the justice system serves to manipulate and exploit ordinary people. This is exemplified in 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' with the light sentence handed out to William Zantzinger; it also surfaces in a particularly terrifying way in the song I now shall discuss, 'Seven Curses'. In this song a man is sentenced to death, and then his daughter is asked by the judge to pay the price of her body to save her father. Despite her father's opposition, the girl decides to pay the price but the judge does not keep his word. Gilmour points out that there is again no relief from this injustice, as the father's death is final and the girl's honour has been compromised.[72]

The song's melody is almost unaltered in each stanza and is simply accompanied by guitar, creating no tension. Dylan's deadpan vocal delivery expresses the shameful action of the judge without implying any feelings because of its emotional detachment. It is just a recitation of how things unfold when justice has to deal with simple people. Furthermore, the effect of Dylan's singing – because in his voice we hear no anger – makes the listener, as Williams puts it, 'want to scream'[73]. These tensions are created by the interplay of melody, narrative and rhythm.[74] Musically and performatively, the song is 'sung and played in an understated, almost detached manner'.[75] Neither the music

[72] Gilmour, p.77
[73] Williams (i), p.99
[74] Ibid
[75] Ibid

accompaniment, nor the vocal delivery are creating the proper emotions to accompany the horrible events stated in the lyrics. However, it is this unsuitability of the music, which, in Williams's words, 'somehow communicates tremendous passion, empathy, rage'.[76] What is heard in the song is, as Gilmour argues, something from another world, the feeling that such a crime can only be punished with other-worldly means.[77] This is supported by the sixth stanza, in which Dylan gives us the image of nature itself being disturbed and disgusted by the events that unfold – nature groaning while the girl is paying the price for her father's freedom;[78] 'The gallows shadows shook the evening/In the night a hound dog bayed/In the night the grounds were groanin'/In the night the price was paid'. Through such imagery Dylan persuades us that the judge's unjust actions have challenged the very power of the universe. Hence, Dylan lays seven curses upon the judge, the final and most terrifying being the inability to die:, '… and that seven deaths shall never kill him'. According to Gilmour, if death is ceaseless and yet not final, the judge can never find rest and will never be freed from his pain.[79]

As already indicated in relation with 'Blowin' in the Wind' and 'A hard rain's a-gonna fall', Dylan often employs images of nature to create his songs. Negus considers this as a result of his sensibility to the surroundings of his environment Dylan has always had.[80] However, nature, which in some cases can be identified with the notion of Universe, consists of a common device among artists as a medium for the evocation of feelings. Not least, we shall not forget that one of the major features of folk music – one of Dylan's most explicit influences – is the imagery which derives from nature. Although

[76] Ibid
[77] Gilmour, p.77: Bauldie is cited
[78] Ibid
[79] Ibid, p.78
[80] Negus, p.13

in ‘Seven Curses’ nature is pictured acting in sympathy with the helpless, it appears as being cruel in ‘Percy’s song’, a song derived from ‘Two Sisters’, an Anglo-American folk song of the kind that speaks about murders caused by jealousy or greed and where the murderer is almost always paying for his unfair actions. However, as Poague suggests, Dylan, well aware that in the world justice is something desired but almost unattainable, is approaching the topic from a different perspective.[81] Specifically, in Dylan’s song, Percy is unfairly convicted for life by the judge. The narrator accuses the Universe (which in this case could be seen as the totality of Nature) for the unjustness of this judgment, drawing on the imagery of rain and wind in order to emphasize the extent of its cruelty. In songs like ‘Two Sisters’, crimes resulting from human passion are always followed by the victimizer’s punishment, in a way that provide a sense of relief to the listener; in ‘Percy’s song’, however, there is no such deliverance. Leland Poague underlines the horror of ‘Percy’s song’ by writing that:

> In the ‘Two Sisters’ it is human passion which motivates unjust actions, and there is no doubt that the universe itself will set accounts straight. In ‘Percy’s song’, to the contrary, injustice is seen as a universal circumstance, and our sense of horror is all the greater for understanding that Dylan is specifically rejecting the earlier, far more benevolent vision of things.[82]

If the belief that the Universe is a fair judge able to give justice in circumstances when people cannot could be considered as a utopian view, then Dylan is again rejecting Utopia in ‘Percy’s song’, implying that justice is not always feasible. The effect of this song is disturbing, because this realization of the world encountered in the lyrics is

[81] Poague, p.95
[82] Ibid, p.96

combined by a notably appealing melody, which Dylan performs in a way that shows his affection for this tune, something especially evident, as Williams notes, with the lines 'turn, turn, turn again…turn, turn to the rain and the wind.'[83] The sweet melody as heard in combination with the cruelty of the event described in the lyrics creates the effect of musical irony.

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Using Irony as a Weapon

The next song that I want to place in the context of the search for social redemption might seem as to be irrelevant to the concept of 'Percy's song', but I think they share a connection. In 'Percy's song' Nature, and therefore the whole Universe, appears to react in an unfair way towards the misfortune of an innocent man. In 'With God on Our Side', on the other hand, we have Dylan referring with irony[84] to the American belief that God, another superior power (to some cultures more important than universe itself) supports their country's military forces. The action might be wrong, but Americans are called upon to consider that 'they have God on their side', even if this means that the God they believe in must be an unjust judge to support such actions.

Even though Dylan was rejecting politics by this stage, some songs like 'With God on Our Side' have a strong political message. The whole military system is confronted with irony. What is actually achieved in this song is a humorous recreation of the grand American military narrative. The irony is also applied to all the mass killers who think they have God on their side, not only the Americans, but also, the cavalry that

[83] Williams (i), p.99
[84] Irony in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is defined as: 'the expression of meaning through the use of language signifying the opposite, typically for humorous effect', as well as 'a state of affairs that appears perversely contrary to what one expects'.

massacred Indians[85] and the Nazis that tortured Jews.[86] The issue of nuclear annihilation is raised in the song ('now we got weapons/Of the chemical dust/If fire them we're forced to/…then fire them we must').[87] The song is musically dressed with a memorable melody built upon a hillbilly waltz tune which, in some cases is being instantly altered in the way Dylan responds distinctively to certain words or phrases.[88] The music and vocal performance, in combination with the words expand Dylan's ironic stance towards American belief that God supports every action of their nation, even if unjust. The implicitly Christian comment of the penultimate stanza 'But I can't think for you/you'll have to decide/whether Judas Iscariot/had god on his side' directs us again to the issue raised in 'Masters of War' where the unrighteous would never be forgiven, another example of Dylan's affinity with the vengeful Old Testament ideology of the early years of his career.

While in 'With God on Our Side' Dylan is confronting the system with sarcasm[89], the humour he applies in the song is bitter but at the same time more indirect and subtle. On the contrary, 'Talkin' John Birch Society Blues' is overtly humorous, clearly a satire[90], but still it cannot be excluded from the argument here because of the heavy use of irony it involves. Another reason that makes this song important for the argument of

[85] As indicated in the second stanza: 'Oh the history books tell it/They tell it so well/The cavalries charged/The Indians fell/The cavalries charged/The Indians died/Oh the country was young/With God on its side'
[86] Fifth stanza: 'When the Second World War/Came to an end/We forgave the Germans/And we were friends/Though they murdered six millions/In the ovens they fried/The Germans now too/Have God on their side.'
[87] Førland, p.339: Even though the song was written in 1963, in 1988 a verse concerning the Vietnam War was added.
[88] Mellers (1984), p.129
[89] Sarcasm according to its definition in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is 'the use of irony to mock or convey contempt.'
[90] Satire is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as 'the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or, ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices'.

this dissertation is its indirect connection with the genres of utopian literature. As Fátima Vieira points out, sometimes in writings of a utopian character,

> …the fiction cannot defy logic, and the passage from the real to the fictional world has to be gradual. This passage can be softened by the introduction, into the imagined world, of objects and structures that already exist in the real world, but which now have a different or opposite function. Out of this situation, satire is inevitably born, as conspicuous criticism of the real society's flaws is part of the nature of the genre.[91]

Indeed, in 'Talkin' John Birch Society Blues' Dylan describes obscure situations which, however, develop in real environments. Though the specific song does not produce images of a perfect Utopian world, it manages through satire to point to the flaws of our society.

It is a song written in 1962 but never officially released until *The Bootleg Series*[92] in 1991. This song obviously ridicules the John Birch Society, an extreme right-wing group which attacked the imagined threat of communism in American society, while at the same time it compels the audience to consider important political issues. Firstly, Dylan's satire emanates from the obsession of the John Birch Society against communism. What is clearly stated throughout the lyrics is that people trapped in this kind of obsession are kept from paying attention to more serious social issues in the United States and in the world generally. In the song Dylan becomes a member of the John Birch Society and hunts everywhere in order to discover where the communists are,

[91] Vieira, p.8

[92] Shuker (1998), p.32; According to Shuker 'bootlegs' are usually 'illegally produced and distributed recordings, which enjoy a rather ambivalent status'. They are linked with the notion of what later was named 'piracy'. In some cases the bootlegs become the moving forces for the official release of a recording by the record labels. Except from the official release of *The Bootlegs Series*, *The Basement Tapes* are also an important example of the above.

but fails to find any – a fact that makes the political discrimination against those at the margins look pointless. Additionally, and most importantly, in the last verse Dylan directs the search for the 'commies' at himself. What is apparent here is his attempt to present the idea that all social – and in this particular song – political issues begin from each member of society as an individual.

The reference of the movie *Exodus* in the last stanza is an early example of another of Dylan's influences, the cinema. In his work he regularly draws on the cinema, either, as Gray points out, by mentioning movies ('Motorpsycho Nightmare') or by quoting from movie dialogues ('Brownsville Girl', 'Seeing the Real You at Last').[93] Indeed, you could even say that Dylan also writes songs which draw on cinematic techniques. In Negus words:

> The themes, structure and narrative tricks of Dylan's songwriting have constantly been informed by a 'cinematic imagination' and can be heard in 'Motorpsycho Nightmare', 'Bob Dylan's 115th Dream', 'Hurricane', 'Black Diamond Bay', and 'Brownsville Girl'. Even the finger-pointing 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll' conveys the story as a pictorial tableau or series of episodes rather than a straight narrative.[94]

'Talkin' John Birch Society Blues' is performed straight, with Dylan's characteristic talking blues style. The melody is repeated throughout over a guitar riff of only three chords (G, C, D) and there are harmonica breaks between the verses. The taunting of the John Birch Society is more than obvious in the sardonic tone of Dylan's voice. What made this particular song a trademark of Dylan's developed social consciousness is the

[93] Gray, p.550-561
[94] Negus, p.120-1

incident where he pulled out of his appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1963 because he was asked not to perform something so explicitly humiliating for the John Birch Society.[95]

Two years after *The Ed Sullivan Show* incident Dylan released *Bringing It All Back Home*. Several of the album's songs are indirectly political, while others are clearly pointing towards a redeemed society. 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)' consists of a commentary on modern civilization achieved through the combination of narrative and preaching styles. The accusations contained in the song are aimed at a wider range of perceived social ills including advertising, propaganda and obscenity. Williams argues that this is a reaction to politics in a different way;[96] the fact that people are receiving a false picture of reality is the major political issue of the time for Dylan. Willis suggests that the song attacks both the 'human gods' who 'make everything from toy guns that spark to flesh-coloured Christs that glow in the dark' and their victim who 'gargles in the rat-race choir'.[97] Shelton observes that the accusations are set over an appropriate musical accompaniment which enhances the effect of the lyrics by creating a more dramatic and intense mood with the repetition of certain phrases.[98] Evident, according to Mellers, are black elements such as the flexibility of rhythm, and the ambiguous blues thirds.[99] Williams states that even if it is performed acoustically on the record it contains techniques of rock and roll.[100] Mellers agrees and suggests that it can be seen as to be

[95] Pareles, p.669
[96] Williams (i), p.131
[97] Ellen Willis, 'Dylan' in *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, Craig McGregor (ed.) (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1973), p.90
[98] Shelton, p.276
[99] Mellers (1984), p.134
[100] Williams (i), p.132

echoing the feeling of the 'electric' songs of this album.[101] Dylan, in 'It's All Right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)' manages to be claiming his independence from the world's 'rules' by simultaneously identifying the characteristics of the world around him. Williams points out that this is achieved not only through the lyrics but also through the driving rhythm and the menacing melody, because the listener is first captivated and enters the mood to feel the song – instead of actually understanding the meaning of the words – by the sound and the rhythm.[102] Dylan, in this catalogue of horrors which is nevertheless humorous and not simply downbeat, is speaking for the autonomy of the individual inside a formed, and, as Marqusee argues, a 'commodified universe'.[103] Dylan seems to be arguing that social salvation can be achieved through self-knowledge, independence and self-reliance; if each part of society is redeemed and delivered from lies and manipulation, then society as a whole can be saved. This position is going to be further explored in the next chapter. In addition, this claim for self-fulfillment as a means to social salvation can also be related to the importance of each person's individual spiritual fulfillment in religious terms, which, as seen from the perspective of Dylan's work, can also lead to social salvation.[104]

'Don't Follow Leaders': Opposition to a pre-Packaged Future

The songs considered so far show Dylan touching on politics, justice, the military, religion and social discrimination like racism and class division. The issue raised in the next song presents the possibility for social improvement through a more internal

[101] Mellers (1984), p.134
[102] Williams (i), p.132
[103] Marqusee, p.124
[104] See Appendix II for a detailed discussion of songs which show Dylan's tendency to point to spiritual salvation as a means to social salvation. (pages??)

pathway. Leaving the context of the world at large Dylan enters every American family's home and proposes a revolution:

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

The 'generation gap', a major characteristic of the USA until the mid-1960s and so properly pictured in the penultimate stanza of 'The times they are a-changin'', is clearly described in Joe Boyd's autobiography *The White Bicycle*. He points out that in the United States parents reacted negatively towards many young people's rebellious attitudes in the 1960s. Children were often locked up, beaten, lectured or sent to psychiatrists, mental institutions or military schools. American parents could not easily accept the next generation's tendency to reject their often newly won status, the one they worked so hard to achieve.[105] Still, the youth generation deliberately rejected every kind of authority; especially parental, and, as Gray writes, questioned 'traditional values and

[105] Boyd, p.66

mores'.[106] This attitude had existed since Dylan himself was a teenager, the time when James Dean and Marlon Brando were icons and when rock and roll became a life stance for teenagers and a means of opposition towards parents' opinions.[107]

The lyrics that conclude the final stanza ('and the first one now/will later be last') bear a biblical allusion to what Jesus had said to indicate that the believers who sacrificed things to follow him would be rewarded in heaven. In this context Dylan makes parallels between the true believers of Christ and the people whose opinions are aligned with the song's views. On the other hand, the people who 'prophesize', who 'block up the hall' and who 'criticize' belong to the group signified by the 'first one now/will later be last'.[108] It is clearly implied in the song, as it is also argued by Gilmour, that the people who dared to accept the social changes of the 1960s, even if 'last' at the moment, would eventually be justified.[109] Williams suggests that, although the words of this song have a really strong impact on their own, this cannot possibly be separated from the way they are delivered in performance.[110] This can be seen as a verification of the evident fact that song lyrics cannot simply be conceived as poems, because in the case of songs the words are communicated through the singing voice, and, as Marshall has emphasized, it is the effect of the vocal delivery that determines the way the song is interpreted by the audience.[111]

Another song that raises the issue of growing up in a society governed by all kind of authorities like those of the USA in the 1960s is 'Subterranean Homesick Blues', a

[106] Gray, p.19
[107] Ibid
[108] Gilmour, p.31
[109] Ibid
[110] Williams (i), p.91
[111] Marshall, p.25

piece created after his 'electric turn'. Dylan leaves the intimacy of the acoustic guitar and enters a new phase in which with the aid of technological means and the presence of the band manages to distract the listener's attention from an exclusive focus on the lyrics.[112] It is commonly accepted that when Dylan decided to change his musical style and 'go electric' a large percentage of his audience was very disappointed. However, Gray has stressed that the fact that he insisted on creating music the way he wanted shows his belief that if an artist does not deliberately try to please the audience with her music, but honestly offers the kind of art that pleases herself as creator, she offers the audience the opportunity to gain a new perspective.[113]

The lyrics of 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' are funny in a very immediate sense while remaining haunted by a dark 'absurdity'. Day suggests that the way the lyrics are written, being carefully structured, reflects society's tendency to keep everything pre-packaged and to forestall every kind of individual growth.[114] Marqusee sees the song as a description of the process of growing up in a society determined to create servants of the system.[115] 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' shows that Chuck Berry had been a big influence for Bob Dylan, as far as the blues chord structure and the voice are concerned. The organ is very prominent in the recording, the lyrics are sarcastic, and, as Shelton says, the bright mood of the song is underlined by the tripping tempo.[116] According to Richard Middleton, the tune can be placed in the chant category, as the short, punchy phrases of the lyrics are all sung on the same note.[117] The perfection of the recording is

[112] Susan Fast, 'Music, Contexts and Meaning in U2' in *Expression In Pop-Rock Music*, Everett Walter (ed.) (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p.53
[113] Gray, p.121
[114] Day (1988), p.22
[115] Marqusee, p.165
[116] Shelton, p.271
[117] Middleton, p.203

achieved with Dylan's vocal performance which is full of energy and power. The backing musicians are perfectly synched with his feeling. Williams puts emphasis on Dylan's phrasing, which is punctuated and mirrored by the bass guitar in particular, in a way that provides a perfect atmosphere for the lyrics to be heard clearly.[118]

Nevertheless, since 'the vandals took the handles', as funny as this may be as a lyric, they are the ones who control things, notably, as Mellers points out, the heritage of industrial and technological development in this content.[119] The multiple authorities of 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' keep everything hidden. They are a monster whose two heads are, in Førland's words, 'corporate management' and 'the bureaucratic establishment'.[120] They are the ones that young people must choose whether to follow or to oppose, with the decision of the former likely to be a probable doom for the development of the society that some day the youth will be in charge of. 'They' are the same who create murderers and also control 'Maggie's Farm'.[121] By the time he wrote 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' Dylan was well absorbed in the rock music scene, and he is now dealing with aspects of technology which is considered as to be a major contributor for the formation and the sound of popular songs. Notation has nothing to do with rock music, as features of conventional music like pitch, dynamics, melody and harmony are beyond the focus of a rock performance. As Peter Wicke says, rock music is dealing with the expression of 'sound'.[122]

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[118] Williams (i), p.125: it is an early example of rap music. But Dylan cannot be considered as a rap innovator, as he must have been influenced by Chuck Berry's 'Too Much Monkey Business' (1957), with its rock rap delivery.
[119] Mellers (1984), p.135
[120] Førland, p.351
[121] Ibid
[122] Wicke, p.13

Sound, in my opinion, is the most captivating element of 'Ballad of a Thin Man'. By the time of *Highway 61 Revisited* Dylan had managed to combine expressionistic lyrics with blues sounds. Iain Smith argues that in this album Dylan blends the sensibility of folk music with R&B and he creates a type of music with a rock background, while abstaining from the familiar forms of Chuck Berry, the Beach Boys and the Beatles.[123] 'Ballad of a Thin Man', despite its lack of any specific political or social commentary, constitutes an attack on the acceptance of a prepackaged, homogenized reality, similar to the one depicted in 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'; 'Ballad of a thin man' can be seen as an attack on the rationalized lifestyle. The artist, as Marquesee states, scorns the people who don't take risks and who compromise with everything that existing society offers.[124]

In many of the sources drawn on in this chapter the identity of Mr. Jones is treated as a matter of significance. Even though I agree with Shelton's view that Mr. Jones is definitely a composite of characters,[125] it could also be assumed, as Mellers suggests, that every single person can be in the position of Mr. Jones, even Dylan himself.[126] Within the song there are, according to Mellers, many questions concerning identity and being.[127] Day suggests that the song might be a commentary on the conflicts between many aspects of the same personality, namely the image of an individual of a highly rationalized society who fights with parts of his identity which are not compatible with the rational self.[128] Generally, in the work of the second phase of his career, the first three albums after *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, Dylan's creations point, according to Heine, at

[123] Iain Smith, 'Bob Dylan' in *Rock: The Rough Guide*, Jonathan Buckley, Mark Ellingham (eds.) (London: The Rough Guides, 1996), p. 272
[124] Marqusee, p. 161: The writer when commenting on 'Ballad of a Thin Man' suggests that the song has homosexual hints.
[125] Shelton, p. 280
[126] Mellers (1984)., p.142
[127] Ibid
[128] Day (1988), p.12

self-deception created by institutions that foster racism and imperialism as the source for all social diseases.[129] According to Day, in a setting where 'a dominant, rationalistic culture encounters another kind of culture', the representative of the former (Mr. Jones), even though he is being attacked, is not separated from the latter (the freaks).[130] For example, note the lines: 'you walk into the room/like a camel and then you frown/you put your eyes in your pocket/and your nose on the ground'. Musically, as Shelton points out, the song is dynamic and earns consistency from the organ treatment.[131] Mellers adds that melody, rhythm and harmony create a net full of a dark threat.[132] The main character of the song, Mr. Jones, as well as other figures like 'the one-eyed midget' and the 'sword swallower' are grotesque, approaching the absurd in art, like 'Einstein disguised as Robin Hood' and 'The Phantom of the Opera' who appear in 'Desolation Row'. The use of the grotesque and absurd in art is one of the main philosophical and aesthetic concepts of Dylan in 1965, as stated by Shelton.[133]

'Desolation Row': Escaping Chaos

We have already pointed to the use of the grotesque and the absurd Dylan makes in 'Desolation Row'. Shelton rightly characterizes the specific song as 'rock visions of contemporary apocalypse',[134] as it indirectly points to a social salvation. Mellers points out that as the song unfolds a list of social problems which cannot be fixed with a single action is given.[135] Day names the modern world as described in the first nine stanzas of

[129] Heine, p.112
[130] Day (1988), p.16
[131] Shelton, p.280
[132] Mellers (1984), p.142
[133] Shelton, p.267
[134] Ibid, p.282
[135] Mellers (1984)., p.142

'Desolation Row' a 'waste land'.[136] The work comes about in a mental space and is full of ironic and sarcastic words.[137] It is a work of art dominated by pictures from Dylan's strong imagination. Nadine Hubb proposes that imagination, in spite of general belief, is a genuine achievement of thought or reflection and not an unintended creation of fantasies.[138] Thus, Dylan intentionally uses this imaginative sequence of absurd images to create the context of the song.

The opening lines of 'Desolation Row' describe a society which is in full confusion. According to Day, the appearance of the circus in the first stanza depicts the depravity of social norms, and also mocks any type of social authority and social control.[139] The existence of the carnival in the particular song goes beyond Dylan's general tendency to use carnival figures as creative vehicles. On this occasion, as Day further suggests, the carnival represents the source of the negativity that constitutes the 'waste land'.[140] In Nelson's view Dylan shows that the grotesque and clown figures are not the tragic men, and that tragic is the clown who thinks he is something better.[141] The concept of Judgment Day is implied in the whole song. The fortune teller is not working any more, as there is no future to be told. Furthermore, the phrase 'Praise be to Nero's Neptune, the *Titanic* sails at dawn' concentrates in a few words the message that the only hope for mankind's redemption can be the possibility of destruction.[142] In Marqusee's view, with the lines: 'And Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot/Fighting in the captain's tower/While Calypso singers laugh at them/And fishermen hold flowers' Dylan implicitly

[136] Day (1988), p.81
[137] Shelton, p.282
[138] Hubbs, p.3: the theory of what imagination is is attributed to Jung.
[139] Day (1988), p.85
[140] Ibid
[141] Paul Nelson, 'Bob Dylan: Another view' in *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, Craig McGregor (ed.) (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1973), p.44
[142] Mellers (1984), p.142

depicts elite art as something hollow, while he gives the sense of soulfulness to the popular expression.[143] This is indicated again, as Day argues, in the fourth stanza where Shakespeare is referred to (with the appearance of Ophelia) in a context where spiritual sterility, caused from the mechanical civilization, becomes evident.[144] Even the placement of Cinderella in the environment of the contemporary city in the second stanza gives a hint that no resolution can be achieved. Changing the environment of a fairy-tale figure threatens the possibility for a happy end of the tale; it might even exclude any such possibility.[145] The facts of the ninth stanza clearly foretell the end of everything. It is a society of irrational people who keep dancing and having fun during the sinking of the ship they are on (indicated by the image of *Titanic*).[146] The end is near. Shelton suggests that the music underlines the biblical character of the song, while the apocalyptic warning becomes more prominent with the utility of repetition.[147]

After the song ends what remains evident to the listener is that social improvement is not yet to be attained. The discouraging image of the door that cannot be opened in the last stanza ('the door knob broke') suggests that since somebody came across this absurd social carnival she can never achieve a careless ignorance of it.[148] Thus, the darkness that characterizes the figures in the song does not allow for any 'redemptive' possibilities.[149] The listener is advised to accept the universal truth that it is

[143] Marqusee, p.149
[144] Day (1988), p.82
[145] Ibid
[146] Ibid, p.86
[147] Shelton, p.282
[148] Day (1988), p.88
[149] Ibid, p.85

chaos first – and make the effort to progress from there.[150] Scaduto agrees and goes further by stating:

> In his work Dylan makes it clear that he knows that it is cowardice to live by an abstraction that society calls order and morality. Chaos must be confronted. True salvation can come only after a descent into chaos, an inner wrenching that will alter his individual character and change the flow and direction of his life. Only then will Dylan be able to answer the questions: 'Who am I?' and 'What should I do with my life?'[151]

From this point of view, 'Desolation Row' can be seen as a song that, whilst commenting on a society which is abnormal and absurd, it also points to Dylan's view that only through a turn into the inner self can salvation – even societal salvation – be attained. It can be argued that this comprises one of the strongest appeals in Dylan's whole output.

In this chapter, Dylan's work that deals directly with the issue of the achievement of a perfect, even utopian, society in which one can find salvation has been explored. We have seen that Dylan, while at times seems ambivalent for its attainment, he is still pointing towards that perfect society by attacking the existing one, either by describing negative incidents and situations or by using irony, sarcasm or metaphors to comment on it. However, there have been instances like in 'It's All Right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)', 'Subterranean Homesick Blues', and 'Ballad of a Thin Man' and 'Desolation Row' where it is emphasized that every individual has a crucial role as far as social salvation is concerned. In fact, it is another of Dylan's strong view points that personal salvation, especially in the sense of individual fulfillment, can be the way for one to attain salvation

[150] Nelson, p.44
[151] Scaduto, p.243

– and it is closely related with every aspect of salvation considered through this dissertation, even the one of social salvation. This stance in Dylan's work holds the running theme of the next chapter.

Chapter II

‘But Sometimes a Man must be alone’: Salvation through Self

Songs are not meant to be realistic recreations of the world, but are rather reflections of a songwriter’s thoughts and feelings, or, as Marshall suggests, ‘an honest representation of its creator’.[1] It is important to note that ‘honest’ does not mean that a song has to be autobiographical in any literal sense, but instead, that it can be a general expression of the artist’s inner world without necessarily referring directly to his life. After all, the majority of songs, as Frith puts it, constitute ‘general statements of psychological or sociological truth’.[2] At this point we should add Bloch’s statement: ‘We hear only ourselves. For we gradually become blind to the outside world. Whatever we shape leads back around ourselves again.’[3] From this perspective, we could say that Dylan’s songwriting was not so much aimed to be heard from the audience, but it was mostly a deeper need of the songwriter to receive the reflection of his work, as, according to Bloch’s quotation, our creations lead back around ourselves again. Dylan’s work has always been dealing with the issue of identity and the inner self in a way that can be linked to the search for salvation. However, his personal life is almost never directly present in his songs; as Ricks puts it, Dylan’s songs are ‘his but not he’.[4] Indeed, there is a theory that supports the view that whenever Dylan says ‘I’ he speaks for somebody else; Bob Dylan is a persona.[5] This chapter deals with the ways in which Dylan’s songs, even without

[1] Marshall (2007), p.18
[2] Frith (1996), p.163
[3] Bloch (1985), p.1
[4] Ricks, p.192
[5] Negus, p.5

referring to their songwriter's personal life and identity, point towards the idea of how finding one's identity, confronting the inner parts of the self, may lead to individual fulfillment, and, as a consequence, to the acquisition of what might be called a 'personal Utopia'. However, while different paths towards such a 'personal Utopia' are suggested in Dylan's songs, not least a spiritual and religious one, individual fulfillment is not always to be attained; the utopian idea of the fulfilled, self-reliant individual cannot always be realized.

There are many cases where Dylan in his songs shows that people are busy doing 'their own thing', while they are all desperately waiting for a saviour to arrive. The lyrics from 'The Mighty Quinn' can be seen as an example: 'Everybody's out there feedin' pigeons on a limb/But when Quinn the Eskimo gets here all the pigeons gonna run to him'.[6] I suggest in this chapter that Dylan's position is that nobody can be anybody's saviour, because 'personal salvation' can be attained only through internal reflection, by fighting one's own demons and confronting the different aspects of one's personality, by aiming for an individual and spiritual fulfillment. I shall do this by focusing on songs from all periods of Dylan's work, but it should be stated here that it is his work from the mid-1960s which in many respects represents this tendency most fully and which is associated with his so-called 'electric rock' period.

Forever Young: the Positive Effects of Constant Renewal

One of the attitudes Dylan often exhibits as ways of achieving individual fulfillment is the lack of an individual's fear and hesitation to move away from a situation that is not

[6] Mellers (1984), p.166: The writer suggests that the last stanza implies that the saviour could be a drug dealer and that Dylan suggests that this is the salvation the world is waiting for.

satisfactory. In 'My Back Pages', for example, Dylan uses his own experience to demonstrate how through self-knowledge one can be fulfilled. In this song, which is one of the rare occasions of songs with autobiographical references, Dylan is saying, while talking to the people who thought of him as their Spokesman, that he became an enemy (to himself?) the moment he started preaching.[7] Thus, as Day argues, Dylan here is stating that one can feel confined even at the moments when he speaks about freedom[8], making in this way an important statement as to what is generally considered to be 'freedom', and what every individual conceives as freedom. Each stanza of 'My Back Pages' concludes with the line 'Ah, but I was so much older then/I'm younger than that now', a phrase which has a contradictory meaning; it demonstrates how the speaker feels younger because he is more mature now; how by approaching a different worldview he has now been renewed. The song indicates that the speaker achieved renewal by coming to terms with what he himself thinks to be right and wrong, something that resulted from attempts to achieve self-knowledge. The esoteric reflection that led to this attitude is also evident in the way the specific phrase is sung. According to Negus, Dylan's voice, when stating 'But I was so much older then', has an external character, is more intense, reaches a higher pitch and throws a statement outwards. On the contrary, 'I'm younger than that now' is delivered at a lower pitch and with a relaxed voice in which we can hear the internal return of rest, the relief of returning to the self.[9] The specific song can be interpreted as a movement away from the ideology of the edges of right and wrong, as it accepts the human 'frailties and frivolities of uncertainty and moral ambiguity'.[10] This

[7] Gilmour, p.30
[8] Day (1988), p.79
[9] Negus, p.125
[10] Heine, p.111

can be felt when listening to the song's recording on the album which is performed by a singer who is more internalized and 'soul-searching'. Dylan's voice here is heard as liberated and not structured, and notably younger than the usual singing voice Dylan had been using until then.[11] 'My Back Pages' shares the feeling that characterizes the whole album. As Negus points out when commenting on the general feeling of *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, the album in which 'My Back Pages' was released, 'The songs continually address questions about personal freedom, but there is no social commentary or protest. There is a discernible air of renunciation, of mistrust, of suspicion, of leave-me-alone, don't-follow-me.'[12]

However, the specific song is musically treated as being a folk song, being accompanied only by acoustic guitar which simply plays strummed rhythmic chords. The melody is simple and unaltered through each stanza. It seems like Dylan, despite the fact that he is stating in the lyrics that he has now moved on, has not yet been totally detached from the past self he wants to abandon. The same feeling is provided by the sound of 'Restless Farewell', which again, while having the character of a folk song, shows Dylan's urgency to move on. 'Restless Farewell', a song which directly states that the speaker is ready to move away from a situation that is not good for him, further exemplifies the consideration of renewal as an important step towards self-knowledge. The lines 'So I'll make my stand/And stay as I am' show again the personal integrity Dylan considered as a necessary requirement for the making of important decisions. According to Williams, the abandonment of a present state and mentality for the sake of

[11] Negus, 125
[12] Ibid, pp.34-5

finding a new one, the search for renewal, has always been a part of Dylan's art and personality.[13]

Another example in this context is 'It's All Right, Baby Blue' in which the lines 'Leave your stepping stones behind, sometimes calls for you/Forget the dead you've left, they will not follow you' play a central conceptual role. Baby Blue is impelled to abandon her conventional life and search for a new worldview that will defy compromise and control.[14] She is also, as Day argues, advised to adopt a new identity, a statement personified in the carnivalesque figure of a vagabond who appears in the words 'The vagabond who's standing at your door/Is standing in the clothes that you once wore/Strike another match, Go start anew/It's all over baby blue'.[15] Day also suggests that the song pictures the positive probabilities of the engagement with new possibilities which will be revealed after the abandonment of a life which, as much as it can be seen as conventional, cannot lead to self-fulfilment.[16] In 'My Back Pages' the urge for moving on is also evident in the musical treatment. The vocal melody is sung mostly at a high-pitch, while the guitar figure, even if it is repeated throughout the song, is more energetic. The rapid notes of the harmonica that open the song contribute positively to the song's meaning. 'Go start anew' is the advice Dylan gives to Baby Blue, himself and everybody in his audience, and this time the whole song can be seen as convincing: lyrics, music and vocal performance are combined in a way to create the feeling of the movement towards a new, positive beginning. In Marqusee's words:

[13] Williams (i), p.94-95
[14] Day (1988), p.80
[15] Ibid
[16] Ibid, p.81

> In 'Baby Blue', Dylan seems to whisper a prophetic reminder of the transience of social status, the flimsiness of the nooks and niches we cling to. Freedom here isn't a social aspiration or static utopian condition. It's a reality that must be seized, the bedrock of our lives that we hide from our selves.[17]

Freedom is indeed a highly important issue in Dylan's work. An important example of this stance is also the next song that I now turn to discuss, 'I Shall Be Released'. This is one of Dylan's songs that show how individual fulfillment, even if not always attained, requires a position of renewal and engagement of new probabilities. In 'I Shall Be Released' a prison cell (which is an image often used in Dylan's songs) is metaphorically employed to reflect the safe, pre-packaged life in which an individual can be trapped. From Marqusee's point of view, in the song the prison is metaphorically representing the way society is constructed, as well as a life that is corporeal[18], constituting a situation from which an individual has to escape. Day argues that the first stanza of 'I Shall Be Released' conveys a search for individual fulfillment while at the same time it denies the view that when something is lost it can be re-found or replaced.[19] In the second stanza there is the search for 'self-realization' which is eventually found by acting against other people's opinions.[20] The third stanza shows that, even if the speaker is longing for self-realization and individual fulfillment, the weakness to achieve this is not only created from the presence of other people, but also, from a part of the self,[21] something that leaves the listener with a negative emotion, as self-fulfillment seems 'unattainable'. Marqusee writes about 'I Shall be Released': 'Somehow its sheer sketchiness conjures up the poignancy of the desire for

[17] Marqusee, p.128
[18] Ibid, p.223: The writer also mentions how prison is evident in many of Dylan's songs, like 'Ballad of Donald White', 'Walls of Red Wing', 'The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll', 'Percy's Song', 'Seven Curses', 'Chimes of Freedom', 'Absolutely Sweet Marie' etc.
[19] Day (1988), p.49
[20] Ibid
[21] Ibid

release and the immutable reality of confinement'.[22] This position brings to mind the opposition between the utopian idea and the awareness of reality.

The element of renewal in Dylan is also apparent in the cases when men who have already faced the divinity of God have the opportunity to change their lives, to be reborn and renewed. Sometimes the concept of renewal is highly requested by people who have been overwhelmed by the earthly difficulties they have to face. 'Gonna Change My Way of Thinking', for example, begins with the words 'There's a kingdom called Heaven, A place where there is no pain of birth', giving a move towards regeneration, the notion of which is supported, as Mellers argues, by the sense of primitivism created from the lack of thirds in the majority of the song's chords.[23] According to Heine, in 'Gonna Change My Way of Thinking' Dylan clearly states that people who are committed to worldly affairs, being affected by corruption, cannot easily attain religious spiritual redemption.[24] What is clearly stated in the song is that somebody has to go beyond consciousness in order to be reborn.[25] Here, as Heine argues, Dylan leaves the Hellhound Blues and sings the Holy Blues, but does not completely lose the sentiment of the first, as 'Gonna Change My Way of Thinking' is written on the form of black, 12-bar blues.[26] However, as Mellers suggests, even if the rhythm is neurotic, the lack of chromatic alterations, the pentatonic melody and the continuous parallel fourths of the guitar create an 'Edenic quality' to the sound.[27] In the context of the song, the change of the 'way of thinking' mostly means the abandonment and denial of earthly pleasures and ideologies.

[22] Marqusee, p.223
[23] Mellers (1984)., p.208
[24] Heine, p.43
[25] Mellers (1984), p.208
[26] Heine, p.163
[27] Mellers (1984), p.208

This is one example of Dylan's overtly Christian work which can be placed in this context to show that, indeed, even if his conceptual contexts have been constantly shifting, themes like religious salvation underlie throughout every other conceptual context. In this respect, this song that speaks about renewal from a religious perspective can indeed be aligned with such early songs as the ones discussed in this part that point towards individual fulfillment through renewal. As Scaduto has suggested quite early,

> Dylan's experience has always been that of an alien in a mechanistic culture. Throughout, he has been trying to answer the questions: Who am I? What is existence? Dylan has been and is today a man seeking *personal* salvation. That search has lead Dylan to religion. Not institutional religion, but the religion of the inner being, the unknown inside us all. God is 'I' – before He becomes socialized.[28]

This statement, even if written by Scaduto in the early 1970s, can be seen as further support of the idea that the overt religious turn of Dylan has been an extreme end of his constant search for salvation.

Returning to the discussion of renewal as a means for achieving individual fulfillment, Dylan seems aggressive when he points to the effects of the abandonment of conventional life in the legendary 'Like a Rolling Stone', a song that begins like a fairytale ('Once upon a time') but obtains a dark, ironic mood. The song is sung to some Miss Lonely, but, taking into consideration Dylan's statement that with the songs of this period every reference to a 'he', 'she' and 'they' constitutes a reference to himself, then someone might suggest that in 'Like a Rolling Stone' the songwriter puts down himself and gains power through self-knowledge.[29] As Heine states:

[28] Scaduto, p.286
[29] Mellers (1984), p.140

> While suffering the agony of touring before audiences who fail to appreciate his new electric, folk-rock sound in the late 1965 and 1966, Dylan's music suggests that only a state of supreme solitude provides equanimity and resolve. In affinity with the demands of Zen, solitary contemplation is needed to reckon with profound disappointment and disillusionment in reaction to the flaws of mainstream society and the tribulations of interpersonal relationships.[30]

'How does it feel to be on your own?' Marshall suggests that to have to face yourself alone and have no covert 'direction home' to oppose to confinements, to commit to change, to deny a convenient everyday life is the way towards finding oneself, to gain self-knowledge and individual fulfilment.[31] 'Like a Rolling Stone' suggests that personal and artistic completion can come for somebody when being on his own. Nelson supports Dylan's view and says that this is a consultation for self-knowledge and not a selfish statement.[32]

The image of a stone rolling evokes the image of constant movement, the ability to be free. Morris challenges us to consider that this kind of alienation might not be always desirable as it excludes the possibility for a home, for a place where someone can feel safe.[33] On the other hand, Mellers argues that with her transformation to a 'rolling stone', Miss Lonely gains the opportunity to make a new start.[34] Polizzotti agrees with Meller's positive interpretation and suggests that the song pictures a release from everything; 'possessions, expectations, societal demands' and raises alienation as a good

[30] Heine, p.43
[31] Marshall (2007), p.97
[32] Nelson, p.44
[33] Morris, p.168
[34] Mellers (1984)., p.140

state.[35] The denial of secrecy and pretence evident in 'no secrets to conceal' create a positive deliverance that underlies the negative character of the song.[36] As Morris suggests, the relation to a place has a great importance for the formation of one's identity, while the absence of such a relation inevitably leads to perpetual wandering;[37] a wandering that aims to lead to the perfect place. One other issue raised in the song, as Shelton points out, is also the 'loss of innocence', the harsh growing up caused by experience.[38]

However, whereas the words might seem scornful, Mellers has argued that the music of the song is positive due to the rising third intervals.[39] Despite the fact that the song is built on a simple, familiar chord structure which is also used in popular songs like 'La Bamba', 'Guantanamera' and 'Twist and Shout', according to Shelton its full sound is complex.[40] The utilisation of chords I, IV and V as short chord sequences is indeed a very common technique in popular music. Middleton argues that the technique derives from Afro-American music and was obviously applied to gospel music from where it was absorbed by secular groups and soul singers and became a stable characteristic of the black music from the 1960s onwards.[41] But it is, as stated by Williams, the performance of 'Like a Rolling Stone' – the conviction in the way the performer says what he says – that moves the song forward, as heard, of course, in combination with the instruments.[42] The song, despite its rich sound, is impressively simple and, from Mellers point of view,

[35] Polizzotti, p.35
[36] Mellers (1984)., p.140
[37] Morris, p.168: The writer suggests that Zimmermann had to be detached from his home and background, to be a 'complete unknown' to create Bob Dylan, his persona. This could be the reason for the lies he told about his origins and the relationship with his parents.
[38] Shelton, p.278
[39] Mellers (1984), p.140
[40] Shelton, p.278
[41] Middleton, p.281-2
[42] Williams (i), p.153

it is this impressive simplicity that provides the song with the feeling of wholeness it acquires.[43] While the melody of the verses is sung in a chant-like vocal melody which rarely moves away from the note C,[44] it comes in opposition to the choruses. Marshall characterizes the singing of the choruses as 'soaring vocals' which evoke the idea of freedom and underline that 'moving on and starting again are the only ways to start from a clean slate'.[45]

'Like a Rolling Stone' was written by a confident 24-year old Dylan and was considered to be a scorning song to someone who was actually being positively advised to have faith in herself, and approach self-knowledge through solitude, renewed worldview and change of lifestyle. In other words, Dylan was saying something that reminds us in retrospect of the later 'Trust Yourself', where according to Heine he uses 'dedicated commitment to self-discipline or self-reliance as the key to realization known as the "path of Self-Power"'[46], thus as the route towards individual fulfillment. There is one group of songs in which Dylan is emphasizing the importance of solitude as a condition for leading to one's fulfillment. A detailed account of some of them can be found in Appendix III.[47]

'I and I': Multiplicity of the Identity and its Dangers

At the end of the previous subsection we saw how Dylan points to solitude as a required condition for a person's individual fulfillment. However, being in solitude reveals another danger: facing the multiplicity of one's inner self. This is the issue that

[43] Mellers (1984), p.140
[44] Negus, p.139
[45] Marshall (2007), p.97
[46] Heine, p.14
[47] Appendix III is on pages....

characterizes the following songs I shall now discuss. Thus, I shall now focus on the idea of the contradictions which develop between the different aspects of one's personality; these often lead to inner battles that create an obstacle to self-fulfillment. In 'All along the Watchtower', for example, the joker and thief characters are considered by Zak Albin to be two parts of Dylan's persona who conduct an inner dialogue.[48] Marqusee, on the other hand, suggests that these two characters are engaged in a conversation expressing the dilemmas of those who were committed to guard the nation's consciousness by keeping their sanity through war.[49] However, even if Marqusee's view is respectable and can be supported in the song itself, I believe that indeed in the song lies something more esoteric; an internal battle that can be at the same time personal and universal. It is the struggle of a man who is trying to find the balance within himself in an effort to achieve peace with himself. On the one hand that part of the self represented by the joker is dissatisfied with the way the authorities manipulate what he owns, while on the other hand this dissatisfaction is balanced by that part of the identity depicted as thief.[50] Shelton supports the idea of joker and thief as two 'contradictory spirits in dialogue' by adding that the period of the song's composition was a time when Dylan felt manipulated economically by businessmen and emotionally by listeners and critics.[51] This does not imply that the song was written from an autobiographical point of view, but it is rather a justification of the above statement that songs are honest representations of the creator.[52]

[48] Zak III, p.600
[49] Marqusee, p.238
[50] Day (1988), p.132
[51] Shelton, p.393
[52] Marshall (2007), p.18

Mellers sees ‘All along the watchtower’ as a reflection of the heroic confrontation of the inner chaos that a fallen man experiences.[53]

The two parts of the identity, joker and thief, as an inner dialogue, are freed from civilization’s ‘pretences’ and they can deal with confusion even at an hour that is ‘getting late’. Mellers argues that the unbearable threat created by the image of the two approaching riders is relieved by the melody that remains calm and peaceful.[54] He adds that the watchtower, which is musically reflected in the tune and the bass line, represents the consciousness and the responsibility of every man’s self, even as joker or as thief, to confront fear.[55] The melody is pentatonic[56], with a riff-based character, built over a sequence of three chords repeated.[57] While it draws on the folk tradition as far as the ballad meter, the ABCB rhyme scheme and the third person narrative are concerned,[58] the melody and instrumentation, as well as the call and response[59] technique between the voice and instruments resemble the blues tradition.[60] The guitar introduction has a threatening sense and the vocal performance is powerful.

The biblical influence is strongly evident in ‘All along the Watchtower’, but not in any religious sense. By borrowing imagery from Isaiah 21 and briefly referring to Revelation,[61] Dylan uses the power of the biblical language metaphorically and rhetorically, in order to convey a sense of mystery.[62] Mellers states that, although ‘All

[53] Mellers (1984), p.154
[54] Ibid
[55] Ibid, p.154
[56] Zak III, p.620
[57] Negus, p.134
[58] Zak III, p.621
[59] Shuker (1998), p.38: ‘Call and response is the technique of singing in which a solo vocalist, the caller, is answered by a group of singers. The practice is also used with instruments, but its origins are vocal’.
[60] Zak III, p.623
[61] Negus, p.112
[62] Marqusee, p.237

Along the Watchtower' seems to present a courageous confrontation with Judgment Day, it does not offer any kind of salvation.[63] Day supports Mellers' view and observes that the warning about a radical change (signaled also by the introduction of two-line stanzas: 'All along the watchtower princes kept the view/While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too' and, especially, 'Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl/Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl') serves as a prediction for change that will not have a positive resolution; a change will indeed occur but with no clear revelatory powers either for good or for bad.[64] While the words might point to a possible positive outcome, the threatening character of the music conveys the opposite feeling and this provokes the listener towards a feeling that the parts of the self might not yet find relief in reconciling.[65]

Inner struggle is also the theme in 'Where are you tonight? (Journey Through Dark Heat)', a song which has surreal lyrics, does not provide a clear chronological order, and does not distinguish between myth and reality. The main character in the first stanza appears to be traveling on a train at night time, crying over the memory of his lover.[66] Train imagery is a feature apparent in many of Dylan's songs of all periods. Trains are part of the heroic, mythical past that Dylan loved to use in his songs. Pichaske writes: 'One of the great sorrows of recent American history has been the passing of the railroad'.[67] As Heine suggests, railroad imagery in Dylan's songs, also an influence from

[63] Mellers (1984)., p.154
[64] Day (1988), p.132-3
[65] Mellers (1984), p.220: Even if in this dissertation I don't want to deal with Dylan's re-interpretation of songs, it is important to note that 'All Along the Watchtower' becomes uneasily doomladen in the performance on the Budokan tapes. Even if the faster tempo affects the song to a loss of its 'grandeur' it makes it clearer that salvation is not yet to achieved for the main characters of the song
[66] Ibid, p.200
[67] D. Pichashe, 'Bob Dylan and the Search for the Past' in *All Across the Telegraph*: *A Bob Dylan Handbook*, Michael Gray and John Bauldie (eds.) (London: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1973), p.103

the blues and Beat poet traditions, is used metaphorically either as a medium for 'escaping a troubled situation in order to relocate or an entrapment to a realm of bondage'.[68] In the mid-1960s, as Marquesee argues, Dylan used trains as symbols of loneliness that fade away in enigmatic distances.[69] The train is also a gospel music archetype, transportation on the way to salvation. Of course, the only period when Dylan used train imagery explicitly with gospel connotations was in the Christian songs. Negus connects Dylan's preference for the image of trains with Schaffer's theory about soundscapes, the theory about the ways with which environmental sounds influence a person's development. This can also be applied to other elements in Dylan's lyrics, like bells and trickling waters. The soundscapes of Dylan's early years have been absorbed in his music in the way the natural environment has. As we have seen in the previous chapter, throughout his career Dylan uses natural environment and weather conditions in his work in a way that contribute to the feelings and ideas he wants to evoke with his songs.[70]

Heine argues that the train in 'Where Are You Tonight' indicates that the journey is being done for the achievement of liberation, but what is to be revealed is that the journey must take place within oneself, in an attempt to 'examine personal troubles and sources of turmoil'.[71] According to Mellers, even the image of lovers separating in the song can be interpreted as the separation of self from self,[72] as a disjunction of the inner world. The inner struggle is clearly exemplified in lines such as 'I fought with my twin, that enemy within, 'til both of us fell by the way' and 'if you don't believe there's a price

[68] Heine, p.64
[69] Marqusee, 116-117
[70] Negus, 13
[71] Heine, p.65
[72] Mellers (1984), p.201

for this sweet paradise, remind me to show you the scars'.[73] This is, as Heine points out, the journey of the protagonist who attempts to gain 'higher truth' and who does not fear to suffer for its achievement, as this is how someone can come close to 'enlightenment'.[74] Mellers proposes that the song deals with longing for fulfillment, a perfect whole that approaches religious form.[75] The struggle has to end with resolution of the separate parts of the self, and Dylan shows that something like this is achievable.

The protagonist of 'Where are you tonight?' is fighting with himself after obviously realizing what is clearly said with the words 'traps are only set by me', from another song, 'Love is Just a Four-Letter World'. However, to be able to encounter your dangerous twin, the negative part of your 'I and I', you first have to be able to identify him, a procedure closely related to the effects of guilt. The character of St. Augustine, as used in 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' is also related to guilt.[76] Dylan's main character seems to be identified with the image of St. Augustine, as is shown with the lines 'Oh, I awoke in anger/So alone and terrified/I put my fingers against the glass/and bowed my head and cried'.[77] Williams finds autobiographical links within the song in the sense that Dylan is guilt-driven, as he has indulged to excess in his sexual life and drug use and now he is waiting for a redeemer.[78] However, while the biographical links made by Williams are credible and relate to actual events in his life at that time, I think it is unnecessary to make such literal connections to this song, given the universal themes of guilt and regret that dominate *John Wesley Harding.*

[73] Ibid, p.201
[74] Heine, p.9
[75] Mellers (1984), p.201
[76] Williams (i), p.239
[77] Mellers (1984), p.154
[78] Williams (i), p.239

The main character of the song 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' is angry because he recognizes in himself the ugly element of his bad side, which Mellers identifies in such images as the 'tearin' fiery dragon', and also by the speaker's co-existence with 'the gifted kings and queens' (the VIPs of every kind) in the same boat.[79] The phrase 'a blanket underneath his arm and a coat of solid gold' strengthens the disjunction between the parts of the self, as the blanket symbolizes poverty and the gold wealth.[80] Scaduto sees the blanket as to be a symbol of the wandering prophets and the gold as to be a symbol of man's 'corruptibility'.[81] The speaker is also horrified because, while he recognizes the obstacle, he cannot find the way to be redeemed like Augustine.[82] As Mellers suggests, the image of the glass in the song is actually the mirror which the central character presses with his fingers in an anguished effort to come to self-knowledge.[83] Williams goes further to suggest that the glass could be an image which provokes the feelings of claustrophobia, something we are trapped in.[84] This can be supported by Scaduto's view that the speaker does not break the glass, since he is 'still afraid to break through the doors of perception'.[85] Musically the song is threatening as it juxtaposes the innocence of the pentatonic melody with the syncopated blue notes.[86] As Scaduto argues, Dylan, in 'I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine' exemplifies that salvation can be attained 'by casting off all the artificiality, the rings and jewels and coats of gold, and ego'.[87] However, even if the road to salvation is known in this respect, the song has a

[79] Mellers (1984), p.154
[80] Williams (i), p.241
[81] Scaduto, p.252
[82] Mellers (1984), p.154
[83] Ibid
[84] Williams (i), p.239
[85] Scaduto, p.252
[86] Mellers (1984), p.154
[87] Scaduto, p.252

powerful Christian echo which ends up being frightening, as, in Mellers' view, it does not seem to offer any remedial perspective.[88]

In the above examples the negative element of the personality is identified and compromised. The next song I shall now discuss, 'Jokerman', on the other hand, has a threatening character, as, even if it clearly deals with the aspect of the ambivalence within oneself, the inner world of the main character is never clarified. Inner world is not the only information about Jokerman that is never made clear, as not even the question of Jokerman's identity is ever given an answer. This happens because, as Gilmour points out, ambiguity is the main theme of the song.[89] Jokerman sometimes appears as being dangerous, while at other points he is positively depicted as a saviour, but it is never specified whether he is a bad person disguised as a good one or the other way round.[90] Day suggests that his Christ-like characteristics could be indications of an authentic spiritual ability, or just the hypocritical elements of a fake, a joker.[91] The most probable explanation is that something like this cannot be specified, as, like all people, Jokerman also has a good and a bad side. Jokerman is initially pictured in the song as being spiritually superior, but throughout the song there is never a moment when he overcomes evil.[92] As Gilmour argues, in 'Jokerman', listeners are warned that they might be deceived if they are trying to place their faith in something or someone, as things, especially religious things, are not always the way people see them.[93]

[88] Mellers (1984), p.154
[89] Gilmour, p.41
[90] Ibid, p.42
[91] Day (1988), p.140
[92] Ibid, p.134
[93] Gilmour, p.41

Despite the idea that Jokerman seems to experience the approach of death, shown in words like 'distant ship' and 'freedom' as the ending of a life, full of responsibility evident in phrases like 'a snake in both of your fists', according to Day, the possibility that death would be a relief from his life's responsibilities does not appear.[94] Jokerman's spiritual state is ambivalent. Aidan Day suggests that the protagonist of the song might be named after the Joker in a pack of playing cards, as it consists of a very strong card due to its possibility to take different forms; hence by using this figure, Dylan depicts the obscure, dubious nature of human beings.[95] Throughout the song there are several negative references to Jokerman, with him pictured as 'dream twister' 'going to the Sodom and Gomorrah' and who 'looks into the fiery furnace', showing that he also is going there.[96] It is not clear if Jokerman (and every Jokerman) has any hope of salvation. As Gilmour suggests, obviously 'freedom [is] just around the corner for you/But with the truth so far off, what good will it do [for him]?', implies that the recognition of truth alone is not enough for salvation to be attained.[97] One of the most frighteningly ambivalent incidents in the song is the reference to Prophet John's vision from Revelation 12, placed in the lines 'It's a shadowy world, skies are slippery gray/A woman just gave birth to a prince today and dressed him in scarlet'. The fact that the child is dressed in scarlet is a surprise, because in the above vision of the prophet, scarlet is the colour of Satan who appears as a red dragon.[98] The situation raised in the song is never

[94] Day (1988), p.134: Evident in the lines 'Distant ships sailing into the mist/You were born with a snake in both of your fists while a hurricane was blowing/Freedom just around the corner for you/But with the truth so far off, what good will it do?'
[95] Ibid, p.139
[96] Gilmour, p.42
[97] Ibid
[98] Ibid, p.41

resolved; there is no sense of praising, nor any sense of scorning Jokerman.[99] Maybe there is the feeling of acceptance and compromise with the idea that Jokerman has a positive as well as a negative side.

'When I paint my Masterpiece': Drawing Inspiration

Another character in Dylan's songs which is not given a specific identity (even if placed in a totally different context than 'Jokerman') is 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. The images in 'Mr. Tambourine Man' are distinctive for their richness at the levels of the lyrics, the music and the performance. According to Marshall, 'Mr. Tambourine Man' is considered to be an important song for Dylan's career as it is the first song he had ever written that lacks of any characteristics of a protest song.[100] Gray suggests that the song is a 'pop exploration of drugs', probably based on the fact that at the time of the song's creation Dylan was a heavy drug user. I think that a reading of 'Tambourine Man' as drug song is misleading and deprives it of its more internal character.[101] Through the lines of the song we hear a plea to an imaginary person to 'play a song *for* me'; Dylan asks someone to sing *to* him.[102] He is trying to reverse the effects of his art, he wants for once to be on the other side of the fence and, instead of him being the creator he would be on the receiving end of the song. Some commentators, like Day (who thinks that it is a song inspired by what the lack of inspiration means for a creator)[103] see it as a call to the artist's muse; Williams agrees with this angle, but suggests that it is not necessarily so.[104]

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[99] Day (1988), p.142
[100] Marshall (2007), p.100
[101] Gray, p.119
[102] Ibid, p.137: emphasis mine.
[103] Day, 'Reels of rhyme: Mr. Tambourine Man' in *All Across the Telegraph A Bob Dylan Handbook* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p.48
[104] Williams (i), p.128

Day makes a significant addition to this by saying that this call for inspiration evident in the song, the call towards the Tambourine Man, can be received as a call from self towards self.[105] The lines 'Silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands/With all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves/Let me forget about today until tomorrow' indicate an interior journey during which, in Heine's words, 'all anticipation and longing are cast aside'.[106] It also conveys, according to Mellers, a person's need to try to experience each new day with a fresh attitude, liberated from yesterday's (bad) experiences, to achieve today's refill of energy so he can again have life tomorrow.[107]

As Day stresses, 'Mr. Tambourine Man' is a plea for creative inspiration, but this plea is being satisfied with the writing of the song. This forms a circle in the sense that if the songwriter stops writing, then he cannot achieve his goal. At the same time there is the contradictory meaning that the fulfillment 'to end all fulfillments' cannot also be achieved.[108] Smith sees 'Mr. Tambourine Man' as a musical representation of Rimbaud's saying that 'the poet makes himself a seer by a long, prodigious and rational disordering of the senses'.[109] Indeed, Dylan in this song seems to look for 'transcendence'. He sings for that special incident that could lead to happiness and fulfillment; the path, the experience, the new door that must be opened to reveal what the songwriter is singing for.[110] In Williams's words, 'the song is for anyone who can feel it, and it's about something so simple we can even put a word to it without too much fear of being misunderstood. The word is freedom'.[111] And, as Scaduto states, personal freedom can be

[105] Day (1988), p.19
[106] Heine, p.130
[107] Mellers (1984), p.137
[108] Day (1988), p.25
[109] Smith, p.272
[110] Shelton, p.274
[111] Williams (i), p.128

achieved only if the 'hangups' of society and authorities can be set aside.[112] Mellers suggests that 'Tambourine Man' could be interpreted as an escape song and, while the equation of 'tambourine man' with drugs would be a good explanation, escape does not always relate to the drug experience.[113] The song also speaks about surrender, with phrases like 'I'm ready to go anywhere, I'm ready for to fade…', 'Take me disappearin'…'[114] It is clear that the dance taking place beneath the 'diamond sky' is closely related to the ecstatic experience.[115] Additionally, Day's view that when someone is drawn in to the sounds of the tambourine it means that he is wholly drawn to the subconscious 'whose edges cannot be fixed',[116] is important here. The 'clown' mentioned in the song is an imposed caricature of Dylan himself. It is something Dylan does generally in his descriptions of the carnival life, also presenting himself as a demagogue in 'It's alright ma' and minstrel in 'Gates of Eden'.[117]

In Mellers' view, 'Mr. Tambourine Man' is musically primitive as far as the pentatonic folk melody and the instrument accompaniment in the Aeolian mode are concerned, but at the same time it is sophisticated in its use of the instrumental sonorities of mandolin and guitar, which give to the song what Mellers calls a 'universalized' power.[118] Mellers furthermore points out that the song is built on an ambivalent tonality and, despite the fact that it is notated as if it were in D major, the melody seems to be in Lydian G major (the subdominant of D major with sharp on the fourth).[119] As far as the

[112] Scaduto, p.185-6
[113] Mellers (1984), p.137
[114] Williams (i), p.129
[115] Day (1988), p.21
[116] Ibid, p.20
[117] Williams (i), p.133
[118] Mellers (1981), p.147
[119] Mellers (1984), p.137

vocal delivery is concerned, Williams argues that Dylan seems to mean every word he sings even more strongly than how he felt when he wrote the song.[120] As Negus states,

> [t]he imagery conjured up by weariness, amazement and the singer's dream-like state constantly cascades downwards, until his declaration to come 'following you' is delivered on the lowest pitch of the melody, an octave below the first pith (F), as if he has reached his decision, calm and contented to follow the Tambourine Man.[121]

Salvation is craved throughout the music, lyrics and performance of the song but it is ambivalent as to whether it can be attained. Mellers recognizes this ambivalence, and comments on the way the harmonica seems to play notes which are not perfectly in tune with the harmony of the song in a way that shows a search for the perfect pitch which can be reminiscent of the search for Eden.[122] It is also one song that can be linked directly with the idea of Utopia as, in Scaduto's words, '[it] represents Dylan's first attempt in song to reach out for something beyond the immediate present, for something to help him climb out of this miserable cage in which we live, away from the "twisted reach of crazy sorrow."'[123]

'Mr. Tambourine Man' throughout its entire length features many images of nature. Nature, as stated at several points in this dissertation, is the ultimate judge and teacher and, according to Heine, before her every human effort seems unimportant.[124] In another song, 'Lay Down Your Weary Tune', Dylan, by presenting images of nature's music, might as well be admitting that human music generally, and his own music

[120] Williams (i), p.129
[121] Negus, p.133
[122] Mellers (1984), p.137
[123] Scaduto, p.186
[124] Heine, p.119

especially, are not so meaningful. Additionally, by imposing the glory of nature's music he also states an artist's need to remain silent and gain inspiration from powerful external sources. Ricks interprets this by claiming that the song opens and closes with the refrain in a way that depicts an eternal circle, a never ending process.[125] The never ending process is also underlined by the musical treatment. According to Gray, the tune in A major is supported by a 14-bar structure that is repeated (with variations) nine times; this is considered by the writer as a further support to the idea of unity presented in the specific song.[126] Dylan's performance in the specific song is also very important, and, as Gray suggests, '[h]andled by anyone else, it would not be the same song'.[127] This might be seen as an additional recognition by Dylan of the infinity of Nature as opposed to human mortality. 'Lay Down Your Weary Tune' can also be seen from the aspect of a religious interpretation. Gray writes:

> The pantheistic idea is also implicit in the rejection of all distinctions. Each part of nature focused upon is given equal weight: to no part is any directly qualitative adjective or adjectival phrase ascribed. The nearest Dylan comes to such ascription is with the clouds 'unbound by laws' and the rain that 'asked for no applause' – and these confirm the idea of God as an evenly distributed presence by suggesting a moral gulf between divinity in nature and the reductive inadequacy of man. The perception of this gulf is upheld by the last line of the chorus, which, were the implicit made explicit, would read: 'No *human* voice can hope to hum'.[128]

This again brings to mind the hovering religiosity in Dylan's work. 'Lay Down Your Weary Tune' is seen by Gray as a song that functions as a recognition of God's divinity

[125] Ricks, p.133
[126] Gray, p.197
[127] Ibid, p.198
[128] Ibid, p.200-201

as opposed to human inferiority. However, this interpretation does not deduct the song of any other interpretation and, not least, the evident call for inspiration.

Both 'Mr. Tambourine Man' and 'Lay Down Your Weary Tune' are in various ways a call for inspiration. When inspiration is achieved, and the goal is reached, everything is transformed, and this accounts for the reason why everyone is looking forward to 'When I Paint my Masterpiece'. Painting one's masterpiece can be interpreted as arriving at the achievement of our highest abilities, having attained self-knowledge and using it in a way to create something complete. Thus, by the time one is able to create a masterpiece, it can be said that he has been individually fulfilled.

'Shot of Love': Drug Influence on Bob Dylan's Work

While both of the songs discussed above can be interpreted as calls for inspiration, they have also both been – justified or not – considered as drug-influenced. Drug use during the 1960s was common and normal, not only within the star system, but also among young people in general. Boyd notes that even 'respectable' kids were drug users, a fact that shook the authorities as it represented a severely negative dimension to what they regarded as 'civilization'.[129] As Kotarba observes, recreational drugs like marijuana, methamphetamines and LSD spread through young white adolescents of the 1960s, both the producers and the fans of rock music.[130] Popular music has always had a close relationship with illegal drug use. Allan Moore, commenting on the drug culture of the 1960s, especially as far as the use of psychedelic drugs was concerned, reminds us of the important influence of Timothy Leary on the drug experience. Leary had advised users to

[129] Boyd, p.76
[130] Kotarba, p.162

listen to appropriate music as a 'guide' through the LSD experience, and, as Moore puts it:

> Timothy Leary, arch-propagandist for LSD in 1967 San Francisco, advocated music as a guide to keep you 'on track', while anthropological work into peoples who use hallucinogens to gain spiritual insight suggests that accompanying music is necessary as a 'set of banisters' (to quote anthropological terminology), which can be held on to as a guide while the ego is dissolved.[131]

In the 1960s people believed that by experiencing the LSD dream they could, and indeed should dissolve their ego in order to understand the unique character of the universe. The dissolution of the ego proved, of course, to be negative as soon as the LSD dream was over. Moore goes on to say that 'This obscurity only finally broke down when the falsity of the LSD dream became more generally realized.'[132]

Bob Dylan was a heavy drug user himself, especially of LSD, in 1965 and 1966.[133] At the same time, as Mellers states, through his music he was trying to balance and combine the poetic and musical depths of his work, in the search for inner identity.[134] Michael Gray supports Mellers's view and sees the 1966 album *Blonde on Blonde* as the first acid rock album released (even though it has to be admitted that many Dylan fans might have problems with this claim).[135] In many of the songs he created in the 1960s the drug experience is evident not only as a covert reference ('Queen Jane

[131] Moore, p.100
[132] Ibid, p.101
[133] Williamson, p.64
[134] Mellers (1984), p.143
[135] Gray, p.119

Approximately',[136] 'Rainy Day Women # 12 & 35') but also, as Marqusee puts it, as a 'running subtheme'.[137] However, Dylan stated that, while drugs are not essential for the writing of his songs, they do help him to 'pump 'em out'.[138] According to Andy Gill, while Dylan's 1966 world tour with The Hawks was full of excesses, he was soon to leave drugs out of his life. He writes: 'Drugs, as [Dylan] asserted years before, were not integral to his writing, but simply helped bend the mind a little. And, having broadened his mind, he knew there were no limits to where he could go next.'[139]

In using drugs Dylan was doing what everyone else was doing at the time. He was controlling 'subjective reality' and altering his mood in order to remain creative. And, as Williams suggests: 'He also used them, specifically amphetamine, to maintain an extraordinary level of creative productivity'.[140] Williams suggests that through drugs Dylan also earns the freedom to express himself directly without holding back and states that this is apparent in his live performances of 1966.[141]

According to Hamm, during the 1960s the American government opposed the playing of songs that referred to drug usage on the radio.[142] As a consequence, 'Rainy Day Women' was banned from radio stations in the USA and Britain because it was 'drug-influenced'.[143] Both the influence and, indeed, the image of drugs in the song were mostly attributed by both the authorities and the general public to the refrain 'Everybody must get stoned'. However, the word 'stoned' can have more than one interpretation and

[136] Shelton, p.281: 'Queen Jane' is not a drug song, but there is an obscure reference to drugs, as 'Mary Jane' was an 'Aesopian' for drugs.
[137] Marqusee, p.186
[138] Willimason, p.64
[139] Gill, p.87
[140] Williams (i), p.203
[141] Ibid, p.206
[142] Charles Hamm, 'Rock and the Facts of Life' in *Anuario Interamericano de Investigation Musical*, 7 (1971), p.14
[143] Shelton, p.321

in the context of this song does, in fact, have several meanings, even though the refrain itself might appear very literal, and was certainly intended to be provocative. Apart from being under the influence of drugs, 'stoned' can describe the persecution of someone who is morally criticized, who is being considered out of line with conventional mores. Dylan advises us not to feel bad about this, because 'it happens to everybody'.[144] This makes obvious that through this joyous song, Dylan finds also the opportunity to speak about criticism and the effects it has on everyone's life, describing how someone is getting 'stoned' while being occupied in everyday activities like 'when you're trying to go home' or 'when you're riding in your car', perhaps to express his own dissatisfaction for the constant criticism he had to experience. But the drug influence of the song is more overt, not only because of the refrain, but also because of the effects of music and performance. The lyrics of 'Rainy Day Women' are perhaps not particularly sophisticated, but the elements of the song are combined in such a way that the chorus line 'But I would not feel so alone, everybody must get stoned' has a joyous character which takes on the character of a 'Salvation Army band'.[145] The whole song draws heavily on the New Orleans marching band style, with slide trombone and oompah drumming.[146] The vocal delivery is not conventional. As Shelton suggests, the fact that Dylan shouts, giggles and laughs deliberately shows that he is high.[147] Indeed, the joyful character of the song indicates that drugs had a positive effect on him at that time. He treats alcohol (as a parallel to drugs) in the same way in the last verse of 'I Shall Be Free', as some kind of mind-easing device through which he can gain a more positive attitude towards life in the

[144] Williams (i), p.192
[145] Marshall (2007), p.27
[146] Shelton, p.322
[147] Ibid

face of the problems the world throws at him. A hint of drug use is also apparent in 'Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues' where the speaker appears to be thinking that he needs 'to get up and take another shot' because he is feeling bad without knowing why.

Even in his songs of the mid-1960s Dylan seems to be indicating that the use of drugs was a positive experience for him, something which put him in a good mood and made him happy. Nevertheless, he was soon to move on again. As early as in February 1966 he told Nat Hentoff during the famous 'The Playboy Interview"[148] of his now critical attitude towards hallucinogenic drugs:

> Playboy: Paranoia is said to be one of the mental states sometimes induced by such hallucinogenic drugs as peyote and LSD. Considering the risks involved, do you think that experimentation with such drugs should be part of the growing-up experience for a young person?
>
> Dylan: I wouldn't advise anybody to use drugs - certainly not the hard drugs. Drugs are medicine. But opium and hash and pot - now, those things aren't drugs. They just bend your mind a little. I think *everybody's* mind should be bent once in a while. Not by LSD, though, LSD is medicine - a different kind of medicine. It makes you aware of the universe so to speak. You realize how foolish *objects* are. But LSD is not for groovy people. It's for mad, hateful people who want revenge.

This is a very striking account of Dylan's attitude to drugs by this stage in the mid 1960s. He speaks very positively about cannabis, suggesting it is not really a drug at all, but is remarkably dismissive of LSD. When he says that LSD 'makes you aware of the universe' but that it is 'not for groovy people' it is difficult not to sense his strong distaste for the experience it gives. We can only speculate about the reasons for his rejection of LSD, given that Dylan's comments in the interview cited above are not

[148] McGregor, p.64

totally self-explanatory. Nevertheless, it is clear that he eventually came to distrust the effects of the 'utopian' trip that hallucinogenic drugs could provide, and that it is likely that this had something to do with the instant change of consciousness and perception of the world that was available simply by swallowing a pill. This was a kind of 'instant Utopia', an 'artificial paradise' of great intensity, but which did not last, and after which everything remained much as before. This is not to say that he was not strongly influenced by the experience of LSD, but it is to say that Dylan appeared to reject that experience in the interview with Nat Hentoff which took place even before the release of *Blonde on Blonde* in May 1966. It is evident through the majority of his work that Dylan's thinking was aligned with the Judeo-Christian belief that supported the ethic that hard work and suffering are the only ways to attain the desired salvation. What is offered through an LSD trip is nothing more than an 'instant Utopia', the false character of which occurs not from the fact that it does not last for long, but because it is so easily achievable and, thus, it is not earned. This might be the reason why Dylan's turn to drugs as a means for the achievement of spiritual and individual fulfillment only lasted for a brief period of time. Additionally, the 'instant Utopia' provided by drugs, which in Gray's words an LSD vision transforms 'an ordinary world into an earthly paradise',[149] becomes negative because, after the drug effect dissolves, one realizes anew how imperfect the real world is, and this makes the contrast between the 'artificial utopia' and the real world unbearable.

This chapter dealt with the issue of salvation through individual fulfillment, and thus with the achievement of one's goals, one's personal Utopia. Of course, as Sargent suggests: 'We want a more meaningful life in a better environment. We want a world

[149] Gray, p.204

where we can find and express ourselves. And we probably recognize that the utopia of a heterosexual male from the United States will not be the same as that of a lesbian from France. But we want a world where both of them can have a reasonable expectation of leading full, meaningful lives.'[150] Dylan's tendency to set salvation, redemption and individual fulfilment as a utopian goal, is something that could be regarded as the expression of a general aspiration common to most people. In this chapter I have explored ways in Dylan's work in which he looks for salvation by means of 'inner reflection' and solitude, and I have also discussed his use of drugs as a means to achieve this. What is characteristic of this aspect of his work is the focus on the self, often in the most extreme way. We now turn to a consideration of the opposite, that is to say the focus on the pursuit of salvation through relationships with others. This is the emphasis of the next chapter.

[150] Lyman Tower Sargent, 'The Necessity of Utopian Thinking: A Cross-National Perspective' in *Thinking Utopia: Steps into Other Worlds*, Rüsen Jörn, Fehr, Michael and Rieger, Thomas W. (eds.), p.10

Chapter III

'Without your Love I'd be nowhere at all': Salvation through Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships often hold a central role as the conceptual subjects for popular music songs. In the prolific work of Dylan the number of examples in which the role of a partner in someone's life is pictured as central is not unimportant. Since the early days of his career Dylan has been singing about romantic relationships, and, again, there are many instances when we hear his conviction that through such relationships salvation can be attained. Dylan often seems to be craving for a fulfilling love relationship which will lead him to salvation; which will be the means to provide him with the achievement of his utopian goal. From this perspective, Dylan is, of course, again aligned with the utopian thought. It is true that the vision of an ideal relationship can be considered as a Utopian thought and it includes a constant journey towards its achievement. This is also suggested by Patrick Parrinder who, after quoting E. M Forster's words from *The Longest Journey*, 'Romance is a figure with outstretched hands, yearning for the unattainable.', states that '[u]topia, the good place which is no place, is also the place at the end of the traditional fairy tale, where "They all lived happily ever after".'[1] Later in his essay, Parrinder comments on how in classic Utopia, ever since it first made its appearance in Plato's *Republic*, romance and passion were not welcome, and neither were the romance-writers. This also explains why poets were excluded from Plato's *Republic*, as their art

[1] Patrick Parrinder, 'Utopia and Romance' in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Gregory Claeys (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.154

'has a habit of dwelling on the less savoury aspects of human behaviour'.[2] Bearing this in mind, we could assume that the division between romantic relationships with the earthly pleasures brought about by such longings and the moral and spiritual orientation of people, is not something uncommon in human thought. Furthermore, it is also presented by Dylan, as, according to Gray:

> Dylan's quest, as it is unfolded in the songs, has always been a struggle within him between the ideas of the flesh and the spirit, between love and a kind of religious asceticism, between woman as the saviour of his soul and woman's love seen as part of what must be discarded in the self-denial process necessary to his salvation.[3]

Dylan's first love songs escaped the usual character of love songs known until then. In his love songs he introduced bigger realism and candor,[4] as well as the urgency to leave and move on, something that, as Gray suggests, shows that at this point of his creativity he considered that the love of women was not enough to lead him to salvation. Barbara O'Dair, however, comments on this period of Dylan by using a different perspective. She sees the majority of the songs of the first stage of his career as presenting powerful women, whose power derives as a part of their 'traditional' role,[5] something that makes Dylan in his youth to seem insecure and vulnerable as far as romantic relationships are concerned. It can be assumed that Dylan, during the first years of his career, did not expect that he could find salvation through a romantic relationship because of the insecurity women caused him. This, however, does not mean that even in those early years he did not believe that salvation could be attained through a romantic relationship

[2] Ibid, p.156
[3] Gray, p.209
[4] Marqusee, p.174
[5] O'Dair, p.82

that would bring him to fulfilment. Scaduto's comment on one of Dylan's early albums should be placed here: 'The central theme of *Another Side of Bob Dylan* is love and personal freedom. Most of the songs are caustic comments on human relationships. Love is more than facades and games and knots; it is mysticism and fantasy, honesty. It is part of that inner world that society has forced us to repress; it is Eros, not *Vogue*.'[6] Thus, it can be assumed that, despite the insecurity Dylan might have felt during these early years, he realized the importance of love in one's life. The way he treats this issue during the first years of his work, as we will see later, shows that, even if he was cautious towards romantic relationships he was constantly searching for the perfect one. In a way, this anticipation in Dylan's early love songs can be seen from the aspect of 'anticipatory illumination', as described by Ernst Bloch:

> Obviously this means that the anticipatory illumination is ordered according to the dimension and status of its utopian meaningful subject, and instead of the impenetrable enjoyment of art, it provides a *connection to knowledge* at very least, and it provides a connection to the *material of grasped hope* at the very most.[7]

The above connection leads us to the assumption that this anticipation of and search for the perfect relationship, which is indirectly evident in the early love songs of Dylan – and which is to be overt in his later work – is linked with the utopian idea of the true existence of such a relationship. It is important here to note, that anticipation is strongly related with the utopian thought and attitude. Bloch regards utopia as 'anticipatory consciousness', a term he also uses as the subtitle for the second part of *The Principle of Hope*.

[6] Scaduto, p.181
[7] Bloch (1989), pp.73-4

While Dylan's career developed, his musical style shifting was also accompanied by shifts of his view points in many aspects, and romantic relationships could not be excluded from this process. More specifically, Dylan positively reassured us that love can bring salvation in *Nashville Skyline* on which he was, as Scaduto points, 'Bob Dylan, celebrating the joy of living, Bob Dylan, celebrating his own salvation', and, as Gray observes, in the songs of *Planet Waves* Dylan more explicitly shows that 'he chooses a woman's love rather than religion as his path to salvation.'[8] To reiterate, in Dylan's songs women have been depicted elsewhere as mysterious, unattainable and out of reach, elsewhere as spoiled and distrustful, and elsewhere as goddess-like figures whose grace goes beyond earthy ideals. But on every occasion he seems eager to feel accepted in an authentic relationship which would help him to feel fulfilled through the interaction with an important person, the ideal woman.

In this chapter I explore Dylan's search for the utopian ideal of the perfect romantic relationship. At the same time I also show how he deals with the apparent opposite – the imperfect relationship. An important aspect of his search for the ideal is that it is characterized both by hope and by the inevitable anxiety that accompanies hope, and which is to do with the fear of failure. As I have already indicated above, Dylan's attitude to romantic relationships changes at different periods in his work. However, it is not particularly fruitful to look at these changes in purely chronological terms, because there are also common themes that recur throughout. My approach, therefore, is largely thematic here. As much as Dylan's viewpoint might shift as his career develops, as far as salvation through romantic relationships is concerned some themes persist.

[8] Gray, p.209

'…just like a Woman': Women Dismissed

There is a specific category of women with whom Dylan's male characters cannot feel safe and cannot have a relationship. In these cases, Dylan can only seek for salvation by dismissing and keeping them at a distance. The women who accept such a treatment are most commonly powerful women whom the male characters of the songs cannot possess and with whom they feel insecure. 'You just did what you're supposed to do' sings Dylan convincingly in the refrain of 'One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)', and it seems that he has a definite opinion about what women are 'supposed to do', as, in many cases he regards them suspiciously. 'One of Us Must Know (Sooner Or Later)' is a rejection song which speaks about a love that turned out wrong. 'You weren't really from the farm/An' I told you, as you clawed out my eyes/That I never really meant to do you any harm'[9] states the speaker of the song and he indicates that the intentions and identities of both the male and female parts of the story were deliberately kept well hidden. The speaker, while making this statement, illustrates how he *did* try to get close to her, despite the fact that her purposes and lifestyle remain ambiguous. Nonetheless, he ends up apologizing for something that is not clearly his own fault. However, the image of his eyes being clawed out by her makes clear that the effects his parting had on her are far stronger. As Williams points out, the refrain is full of apology, putdown, pleas for forgiveness and reaffirmation of higher purpose and seems to release bitterness and guilt.[10] In contrast, the line 'I didn't realize how young you were' is full of compassion and understanding and gives a contradictory feeling to the song. As much as the lyrics, which are restricted only in giving a clear picture of what has happened, might be

[9] Mellers (1984), p.146
[10] Williams (i), p.186

descriptions of a negative incident, the music and vocal delivery are positive and, as Gray suggests, remind us a party, with the rising and falling of the voice which occurs 'against a backdrop of bubbling noises and motion'.[11] Mellers supports Gray's view, and goes on to add that the tune has an upward movement and a strong pull towards the refrain, making the rejection look like an affirmation.[12] Additionally, Gray argues that Dylan's vocal delivery contributes greatly to the total sound of the song, in that the way he delivers and stresses the words seems to add to the music itself, rather than simply to the delivery of the words.[13] If the song can be seen as a quest for atonement with the clear picture of repentance, then the joyous music and delivery positively indicate that the speaker is confident of attaining it and, as Gray suggests, this time the outer world does not seem to threaten the people involved in the relationship.[14]

On the contrary, the next song I shall refer to, 'Ballad in Plain D', which is one of Dylan's directly autobiographical songs, recalls a bad incident between him and Suze's sister and mother, which does not give any possibilities for atonement. Gray thinks that 'Ballad in Plain D' is a bad song because the words seem to be forced to match with the music and fit into rhymes. He also believes that the words are not well combined with the vocal melody.[15] I do not share Gray's opinion, as the imbalance of the words and music evokes the painful feeling of the speaker who, by force, has lost 'the could-be dream-lover of my lifetime'. The harmonica solos, especially the one heard before the last stanza, sound aching and agonizing. The girl is not directly put down in the words, except from the statement that she is being suspended by her mother and sister's (both appearing

[11] Gray, p.151
[12] Mellers (1984), p.146
[13] Gray, p.152
[14] Ibid
[15] Ibid, p.132

as bad figures) interference in her life. Even when the speaker is fighting with the sister, the love-object seems to be ineffective, being 'the victim of sound' who 'shattered as a child 'neath her shadows'.

In 'One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)' the speaker has left a woman and depicts the situation in a way to make the listener understand that the male part of the relationship was the strong one, while, on the other hand, in 'Ballad in Plain D' a relationship is destroyed by the interference of other people. In the latter case the male figure is again energetic and tries to fight in order to protect himself and the relationship, while the girl – even if not being directly put down with the words – is given indirectly a negative role with her hesitation and fear to take part in what was going on. The way Dylan uses the female role in both of the above songs brings to mind Marqusee's opinion that 'women cannot win in Dylan's songs'. In his songs, Dylan seems to prefer silent women, while on many occasions he manages to provide accusations towards women which are ambiguous, in the sense that these accusations coincide with his critique of the folk movement.[16] This is evident in songs like 'To Ramona', 'It Ain't Me, Babe', 'It's All Over, Baby Blue' etc. This position can also be applied to 'Ballad in Plain D', as, though the speaker realizes his fault in the whole story, the fact that 'he hasn't found the words to say sorry' can be interpreted as his unwillingness to apologize, despite the fact that he recognizes 'how precious she is'. Gray, on the other hand, suggests that the song is unsatisfactory in this respect because it seems to have been written in a state when Dylan was not detached from the incident, and so it seems that the song resulted from 'the unsorted, ill-articulated aftermath of the experience'.[17] Nevertheless, it can be argued

[16] Marqusee, p, 176
[17] Gray, p.133

that, whatever the motivation for the song's composition and whatever its aesthetic value, it serves our purposes here from the perspective of the discussion of Dylan's attitude towards women in the 1960s. Whereas the separation of the two is pictured as the deliverance from a problematic situation, the singer does not face it as freedom, something that becomes explicit when his friends who are in a relationship ('in prison') receive a pessimistic reply to their question about how it is to be free. Thus, Dylan seems to consider that, even though their relationship is doomed for him, it was only through their relationship that he could attain fulfillment. The monotonous performance style of this sad ballad agrees.

Dylan's love songs will continue to appear as put-downs for women for the most part of the 1960s, especially from *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* up to *Blonde on Blonde*. This position seems at times to be his defense against the power women may have had on him. It is believed, as Marqusee points out, that Dylan's mid-1960s songs are misogynistic and sexist; in these songs women are pictured as being an 'alien species', exciting on the one hand, but on the other hand not to be trusted.[18] 'Just Like a Woman'[19] has been interpreted as a misogynic song. Mellers, however, supports the view that since, despite the ironic words, the music is not hostile and the vocal delivery is tender and compassionate, especially when 'breaks just like a little girl' is heard, the song should be considered as anything but misogynistic.[20] The female sung to seems to have power over the singer, notably sexual power. With 'little girl' Dylan manages to make her lose some of her power, or make the speaker gain some of his power, in an ambiguously revengeful

[18] Marqusee, p.180
[19] It is believed that Edie Sedgwick has been the inspiration for 'Just Like a Woman', as well as for 'Leopard-Skin Pill-box Hat' and 'Like a Rolling Stone'.
[20] Mellers (1984), p.148

way. According to O'Dair, when Dylan portrays women in his lyrics who seem too powerful, it is most likely that he will eventually find a way to take the power away from them.[21] However, as is the case with 'Just Like a Woman', to take away their power does not simultaneously mean that the male characters of his songs can be free from the effects of the women's powers.[22] Nowhere in this particular song is there a clear insult aimed at women, but the lyric 'you fake just like a woman' makes all women think that they are described as 'devious manipulators'.[23] As Gray suggests, the simple words of this song gain meaning from Dylan's delivery and pronunciation,[24] and Williamson agrees and goes further to state that, while the lyrics are hostile, they are delivered in an affectionate way.[25] There is a moment when the speaker admits his vulnerability to the woman, by saying 'Please don't let on that you knew me when/I was hungry and it was your world', showing in this way a shameful, vulnerable admission that the reason he is opposing and leaving her is that he must get some distance from her power in order to attain his own power as an individual. However, Williams suggests that pain is evoked when he admits that since he cannot have as much of her as he wants, then he has to go, even if this is not what he really wants to do.[26] As O'Dair observes, the attitude Dylan conveys towards powerful women is not necessarily unexplainable:

> As rebel himself, he might appreciate their power grabs; as a man of his generation, he's bewildered by women who stake their claims, efforts that threaten a quick-change artist who depends on the Other to stay in a fixed role. Every chameleon needs his rock.[27]

[21] O'Dair, p.81
[22] Williams (i), p.191
[23] O'Dair, p.85
[24] Gray, p.149
[25] Williamson, p.280
[26] Williams (i), p.192
[27] O'Dair, p.86

As a defense against a powerful woman who can belong to nobody Dylan writes 'She Belongs to Me'. It is an ironic song, one that Shelton names an 'anti-love song',[28] as far as lyrics are concerned, but it communicates something different by its sound. Indeed, its sound implies a tender love song while the words are describing a 'man-eater'.[29] The song is sweetened by the melodies of harmonica and electric guitar in a way that evokes a vulnerable admiration for the object described, despite her dangerous character. The woman clearly possesses him, thus, the speaker is in a negative position, not free and not optimistic about his freedom and fulfillment, as long as he stays with her. If we interpret 'It Ain't Me, Babe' conventionally as a song for a lover, it appears to be exemplifying a similar dismissal of a woman who, dependent and demanding as she is, has many emotional demands the speaker understands but does not want to fulfill, so he dismisses them in order not to be possessed.[30]

In all the above examples Dylan's attitude implies that the only way to attain salvation through relationships with women who seem 'inappropriate' – usually due to their power – is to be separated and take a distance from them. These women, who are threatening a man's identity and self-actualization, have to be left behind in order to give space for a search of the desirable, fulfilling relationship to take place. It is important to note that in the majority of these cases the musical and performance elements of songs have a tender character, a contradictory element to their dismissive words. This might be assumed to be a Dylan's recognition that, though the relationships described with the words of the above songs are not ideal, the ideal relationship exists, and the hope for

[28] Shelton, p.272: The image of the egyptian ring implies that the song might have been written for Joan Baez.
[29] Williams (i), p.134
[30] Poague, p.89

attaining it is what is communicated through the music which is never hostile in these 'put-down' songs. In Adorno's words:

> utopia is essentially in the determined negation, in the determined negation of that which merely is, and by concretizing itself as something false, it always points at the same time to what should be…And insofar as we are not allowed to cast the picture of utopia, insofar as we do not know what the correct thing would be, we know exactly, to be sure, what the false thing is.[31]

Adorno's statement further strengthens the connection between Dylan's dismissing love songs with Bloch's idea about 'anticipatory illumination'. Dylan realizes that the relationships he describes in 'One of Us Must Know', 'Ballad in Plain D', 'Just Like a Woman' and 'She Belongs to Me' are not ideal and the recognition of this alone makes him anticipate for the ideal, fulfilling relationship which, however, can be seen as utopian.

'Stay while the Night is still Ahead': Sexual Suggestion

Finding the ideal relationship is, in Dylan, something difficult and hard to achieve. He often critically presents an ideal relationship the way it should be by describing a relationship with flaws. Aware of the difficulties and the utopian character of an ideal relationship, there are some times in Dylan when in his songs he presents a temporary state of fulfillment through a physical, sexual relationship that does not suggest any possibilities for spiritual communication. This is the case of the next songs I shall now discuss. In 'Lay, Lady, Lay', the words comprise a direct sexual invitation. Dylan utilizes

[31] Bloch (1989), p.12

plain, as Ricks puts it, 'American-English'[32] to express his request which, however, does not make him seem eager, but is rather an invitation to the woman.[33] The inviter in the song sounds 'commanding and kind' with elements of 'strength and vulnerability', asking in a manner that is 'more tender than aggressive'.[34] 'Stay while the night is still ahead' could be interpreted as an invitation which does not promise anything more than one night. The content of the words is supported musically. The non-specificity of what is going to be the case is also implied by the ambiguity of the harmony, created by the fact that dominant is not clearly used. The first refrain hints the dominant, but this harmony is clearly articulated only later in the verse. Before that, the chord succession (I-'III'-bVII-II7) is only useful, as Everett suggests, as a support to the descending pedal steel line that in terms of voice leading prepares the dominant. This preparation, according to Everett, is also evident in the lyrics: 'Whatever colors you have in your mind, I'll show them to you and you'll see them shine'.[35] The heartfelt sound of the song communicates the idea that the desirable night with the woman is believed by the singer to be a temporary achievement of salvation for both parties.

The woman sung to in 'Lay, Lady, Lay' could be the same woman to whom Dylan was singing 'I'll be Your Baby Tonight' one year earlier, or at least a woman who evokes the same feelings in him. In 'I'll be your Baby tonight' the speaker does not mention anything external to the relationship, like problems, dreams, nightmares, guilt and responsibilities. He just speaks for his relationship with the woman to whom he sings. He doesn't promise anything he cannot fulfill, he is just going to be her baby for

[32] Ricks, p.154: it is one of the very few Dylan songs that refers explicitly in its opening line to the title. The same things appears in 'If Not For You'.
[33] Ricks, p.156
[34] O'Dair, p.80
[35] Everett, p.321

tonight; tomorrow is nowhere mentioned.[36] As Appleby points out, 'I'll be your baby tonight' playfully presents the 'sensual aspects of romance' in a way that only very few of Dylan's songs do.[37] The girl is advised to leave behind any ideology and philosophy for a while and enjoy the simple realities of life.[38] Emotional vulnerability is kept at bay by the music, which, as described by Mellers, is well-worn, like ragtime.[39] However, the music, despite the stability of rhythm, acquires an unspecific sensuality that suits the emotion of the words. The musical style is country ballad with occasional blues colouring. The woman is advised 'You don't have to be afraid', because, as Mellers suggests, anything terrifying and harmful, including the Thin Men mentioned in the lyrics, cannot be present in that room and that bed, and she can feel safe with him.[40] Still, Dylan is suggesting a situation that would bring only temporary fulfilment for both; thus, he is not yet ready to attain salvation through any closer relationship with a woman.

The object of desire in the previous two songs does not take a specific shape, but Dylan directs his singing in 'Spanish Harlem Incident' to a specific female presence, a Gypsy. As Gray observes, 'Spanish Harlem Incident' is the first song Dylan wrote where he uses impressionistic lyrics.[41] The image of a Gypsy girl as the object of desire makes this song an example of Dylan's disdain for middle-class, educated women and his preference for 'black earth-mothers' who, as Shelton points out, help him to be connected with deeper feelings.[42] In Scaduto's words, in 'Spanish Harlem Incident', 'the woman represents a pure aboriginal state, sexuality without guilt, and personal freedom. This is

[36] Mellers (1984), p.159
[37] Appleby, p.52
[38] Shelton, p.395
[39] Mellers (1984), p.159
[40] Ibid
[41] Gray, p.129
[42] Shelton, p.220

something that Dylan covets, the ability to be totally free, to feel with the flesh, and not a detached intellect.'[43] The girl, despite the specific identity Dylan gives her, remains elusive, as, although he knows she is somewhere near, he does not know exactly where she could be found. If he attains her, he will attain fulfillment, even if only by touching her, something the lines 'I got to know, babe, will I be touching you/So I can tell if I'm really real' make evident. His wish to attain her is also evident in the song's sound, which is, as suggested also by Gray, strong and rich.[44] Yet it is clear that he knows that an interaction with the 'Gypsy gal' would be as brief as a body contact, but he does not seem to want anything more from her to feel complete at the specific moment. The temporary fulfillment Dylan is attempting to reach with the physical invitation to the woman can be seen as reminiscent of the temporary utopia one can attain through drug use, something that has been discussed in the previous chapter. However, this is a tendency that is not usual in his songwriting, as, just like his awareness of the temporality of the drug utopia, this brief fulfillment is once again no longer something satisfactory for him; it does not include struggle, and, definitely it does not include emotional involvement. This is why in the majority of his songs that concern fulfillment through a romantic relationship he seems to be more aware of the struggle, difficulties and effort needed to attain the perfect relationship which will lead to the desirable fulfillment.

'…and still you 're not here': Out of Reach

As we have seen in the previous discussion of songs, Dylan, while at times attempting to write songs about the temporary fulfilment a brief physical interaction might bring, does

[43] Scaduto, p.141
[44] Gray, p.116

not seem to be positive in that relationships of this kind can indeed lead to salvation. On some other cases, he identifies women who he sees as able to bring him to fulfilment, but these women remain elusive and unattained. As much as in his songs Dylan casts them as difficult to find, they are still pictured as existent. This can be linked with Bloch's comment on Bertolt Brecht's phrase 'Something's Missing'. He says: 'this sentence, which is in *Mahagonny*, is one of the most profound sentences that Brecht ever wrote, and it is in two words. What is this "something"? If it is not allowed to be cast in a picture, then I shall portray it in the process of being *(seined)*. But one should not be allowed to eliminate it as if it really did not exist….'[45] What is missing in Dylan's songs in this respect is not the woman, since she is existent, but the relationship that he could achieve with the specific woman which is on the one hand likely to be achieved since the woman exists, while it is on the other hand unattainable since the woman is elusive and cannot be obtained. And when Dylan is at the quest for his ideal woman (and not the one who lusts, as shown in the previous section) he usually seems pessimistic of obtaining her. Below I shall consider a group of songs in which the desirable female is elusive and unattainable.

It can be said that Dylan is convinced that if he manages to acquire his love object, he would be led to the desirable salvation. Most occasions, however, are proved unsuccessful. This is the case he raises with 'Tough Mama', a song where he seems to re-approach the issue of the goddess-like figure of the 'sad-eyed lady', who also acquires the strange beauty of the forbidden, and which will be discussed later.[46] What brings the feeling of lack of fulfilment on this occasion is the phrase with which the song finishes:

[45] Bloch (1989), p.15
[46] Mellers (1984), p.174

'Meet me at the border, late tonight', which implies, as Mellers argues, that he is already at the border, but she is not yet to be found,[47] though she does not seem unable to be obtained. Shelton argues that 'Tough Mama' has plosive vocal delivery and its music is in boogie, blues style,[48] while Mellers adds that the untidy, tangled musical phrases do not allow any melody to be defined.[49] The elusiveness of the melody – which makes clear the image of the elusive woman – supports the image of him waiting on the border but not meeting her arrival yet.

Dylan invites 'Tough Mama' to meet him at the border, though without any positive response evident. On the contrary, in the song 'Hazel', it is the desirable woman who seems to encourage the speaker, while she herself will eventually never go to meet him. A man in love is singing 'you called and I came' but obviously this is a part of her 'game'. The image of the 'dirty-blond hair' makes clear that the speaker recognizes that the girl is not flawless. The speaker obviously understands and accepts her human nature, which is the excuse he has given for the game she plays with him now he is 'up on the hill and still you're not there'. The song is melodious and poetic,[50] while its musical elements are in opposition. On the one hand, the vocal line covers a big range and rises unexpectedly high, while, on the other hand, the harmonic sequence is constantly repeated.[51] It is not clear whether the love is reflected in the airy vocal line or the confined harmony. It cannot be identified if it is the voice that manages to escape the harmonic obsession, or if it is this harmonic sequence which supports the voice in its

[47] Ibid
[48] Shelton, p.435
[49] Mellers (1984), p.174
[50] Shelton, p.435
[51] Mellers (1984), p.174

escape.[52] The only clear image is that the girl is needed, and, even if apparently elusive and unattainable, the speaker is longing and waiting for her, as if he would be fulfilled if he possesses her.

Ten years earlier Dylan would have been singing to her 'All I really want to Do'. Notably, his claims in 'All I really want to Do' do not sound very convincing, even if the speaker's intentions are sincerely harmless. In the words of the song a 'simple' man is trying to approach a complex, self-protective woman. He tries to avoid arguments and to accept differences.[53] Shelton sees the song as a 'lampoon' of 'boy meets girl' in the time of psycho-analysis and shifting values in social-sexual relationships'.[54] It is built as a positive country waltz. The joyous phrases define the positive by enforcing lists of what the singer considers as negatives.[55] But still, obtaining the girl looks improbable, and his claims are left swinging in the air like the high pitch of every 'do' and the fade of the harmonica.

'Meet me in the morning' is another instance where Dylan's quest for a meeting does not have positive results. The possibility that the girl will not appear is strongly evident with the lyric 'Look at the sun sinkin' like a ship/Ain't that just like my heart, babe/When you kissed my lips?' It is a 12-bar blues with many dissonances. The strangled vocal line is, as Mellers puts it, occupied in a painful conversation with the guitar. In the general sound of the song the agony and recognition that she will not 'meet me in the morning' is applied throughout. The song does not hint at any hope for a

[52] Ibid, p.175
[53] Heine, p.121
[54] Shelton, p.219
[55] Mellers (1984), p.133

positive resolution.[56] It seems like Dylan is going to be singing once again 'oh, where are you tonight, sweet Marie?', as he was in 1966's 'Absolutely Sweet Marie'. According to Mellers, there is a balance in the ironic title as Marie, who was undoubtedly sweet, something underlined by the music, has the negative character of the one who abandoned the singer, and now she is absent from his life.[57] Shelton describes 'Absolutely sweet Marie' as an 'Up-tempo blues shuffle, pure Memphis'[58] and Negus adds that it is one pop number that seems to be influenced by the Beatles' style.[59] Marie, no matter how joyously she is requested, it is impossible to make her appearance, thus the singer's desire is left once again unfulfilled. As indicated above, Dylan, by recognizing the existence of the 'ideal' woman he anticipates to have the ideal relationship, but to achieve this utopian state of fulfilment he must realize that 'something's missing'. And this is the willingness of the other part.

Finding 'Utopia' in Everlasting love

The above discussion shows how Dylan wrote songs about women who, elusive as they are, still retain their earthy character. There is, nevertheless, another category of women who Dylan treats in his songs as being mostly unattainable, and these can be described as 'goddess-like figures', found in songs like 'Visions of Johanna', 'Isis' etc. In Dylan's songs the relationship with women who are described in these terms is not likely to lead to a positive and fulfilling relationship, and this is discussed in more detail in Appendix IV. As much as this type of woman can be seen as the ideal, in Dylan's songs the male

[56] Ibid, p.181
[57] Ibid, p.148
[58] Shelton, p.324
[59] Negus, p.41

characters cannot attain an ideal relationship with them. It should not be considered, though, that Dylan has always been pessimistic about obtaining the ideal relationship, and this is what is going to be demonstrated in the songs that I now turn to discuss, in which Dylan's male protagonists find the true love and the kind of fulfilling relationship that would lead them to salvation. 'Love Minus Zero/No Limits', for example, which is a song that is considered to be one example of the typical love songs of its time, shows that when a relationship is fulfilling for Dylan, he sings for the woman by picturing her as saviour. Shelton argues that with this lyrically and musically powerful song the songwriter shows that, despite the anti-love songs he wrote until then, he does dream of the ideal woman and relationship.[60] Mellers suggests that the female presence described in the song is spiritually superior and is not connected to the human weaknesses that may harm every human interaction.[61] Yet, as Tamarin states, the images evoke 'longing, and a kind of humility before a complicated woman',[62] since the woman is described as to be wise enough to acknowledge that 'there's no success like failure, and failure's no success at all'. The love pictured in the song is one from which, as Day states, nothing can be deducted; a love that is also above every materialistic value.[63] The song, as much as it is musically and lyrically simple, speaks about love stating its real essence, its complexity.[64] The ethereal melody floats above diatonic harmony[65] and, as the musical

[60] Shelton, p.272
[61] Mellers (1984), p.136
[62] Jean Tamarin, 'Bringing it all back home' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*, Kevin J. H. Dettmar (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.134
[63] Day (1988), p.32
[64] Tamarin, p.134
[65] Mellers (1984), p.136

flow is calming, it seems that the woman offers serenity.[66] The vocal delivery, which is soft and rich, contributes positively to the emotions created by the lyrics and the music.

'Love Minus Zero/No Limits' pictures a love relationship that could create a feeling of security and bring about a sense of salvation and fulfillment. The same feeling is evoked by 'Down Along the Cove' which shows, in Shelton's words, that 'salvation through love (of a person, an ideal, or religious faith) can be complex or as simple as a woman's smile'.[67] In this blues song clichés are used, such as 'Lord have mercy, sure is good to see you coming today', 'Down along the cove I spied my little bundle of joy', 'Everyone knows we're in love, yes they understand' but are given a different character due to the way they are sung.[68] Dylan, according to Day, has the ability to use a cliché in a way that transforms it from its 'cliché' character, either by giving a new perspective to an old idea, or by changing it in such a way that one aspect of it is seen in a new light.[69] The role of the music, of particular musical genres and the associations that such genres might have, all play an important part in this process of shedding new light on otherwise familiar things, as for example, the almost inevitable use of cliché in writing lyrics for love songs. The tune of 'Down Along the Cove', which is a blues song, swings like a dance[70] and, along with Dylan's singing voice, states the happiness and positivity created by the love described. Against the well-worn clichés employed in the lyrics, and the slight sense of uneasiness these arouse, that perhaps such love won't last forever, the music comfortingly assures us against the odds that it will. Dylan in 'Down along the

[66] Shelton, p.272
[67] Ibid, p.394
[68] John Landau, 'John Wesley Harding' in *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, Craig McGregor (ed.) (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1973), p.113
[69] Day (1988), p.5
[70] Shelton, p.394

Cove' presents a song which hopefully pictures the fulfilling relationship. However, by the use of clichés he indirectly presents the possibility of a non-positive resolution. As Bloch states when commenting on the notion of 'hope', 'Hope is surrounded by dangers, and it is the consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for object possible.'[71] In 'Down Along the Cove' this danger is given an affirmative resolution by the positive musical character.

This will not be the case, as it is to be indicated below, with the next song I now turn to discuss. In 'Wedding Song' (on the album *Desire*), the female presence is pictured, in Gilmour's point of view, as suggestive of the Divine.[72] After her entrance in the speaker's life, 'the circle's been complete', as the song puts it; his desires are fulfilled and he feels complete within the relationship with her. Gilmour states that the story of Genesis is evoked with the image of her breathing life into him.[73] His declaration statement 'sacrificing the world for her', thus stating that his love for her is stronger than anything else, underscores her presence as what Gilmour describes as a Christ-like figure.[74] However, while the song celebrates the ever lasting love, the 'conventional hyperbole', as Mellers puts it, and the repetition of words comes as a contrast to the tonal ambiguity which, even if it is supported by diatonic harmony, floats melodically between the aeolian and mixolydian modes.[75] However, this contradiction does not affect negatively the feeling of fulfillment evoked by the song. It just enhances the element of ambiguity raised by Bloch as to be a part of the notion of 'hope'. It enhances the idea that

[71] Bloch (1989), p.16
[72] Gilmour, p.36
[73] Ibid, p.37
[74] Ibid, p.38
[75] Mellers (1984), p.176

the 'The hindering element is also in the possible'.[76] Thus, in this case, Dylan, by describing an ideal love also points to the ambiguity as to whether this love is indeed an ideal one. However, in 'Wedding Song' this is an ambivalence that remains. The uncertainty raised by this otherwise positive song leads us to the next section, which is concerned with songs that describe idealized relationships that eventually nevertheless end up being disappointing.

'I ain't Sayin' you Treated me Unkind, but don't Think Twice, It's all Right'

In Bloch's words, 'hope is the opposite of security. It is the opposite of naïve optimism. The category of danger is always within it. This hope is not confidence….'[77] And this is what connects this category of Dylan's songs with the idea of hope; the idea of the ideal, utopian relationship and the recognition of the disappointments and imperfections that every real relationship carries. As opposed to the songs discussed above, in this category of love songs, Dylan, while he thinks he has found the ideal, fulfilling relationship he was hoping for, ends up being disappointed and hurt. When the words of 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right' begin they come as a brief surprise, as the listener is not prepared to accept that the major tonality of the harmonies and the lively guitar are set to accompany a 'put-down' song. The speaker confesses how he thinks he was treated unkindly by the girl, while he ironically tells her that 'it's all right', probably because in that way the girl is denied the opportunity to defend her position. Despite the obvious disappointment of the singer, the song does not comprise a 'goodbye' to an 'unsuitable' girl, but is rather a recognition that the singer has failed to find the relationship he wanted and which would

[76] Bloch (1989), p.16
[77] Ibid, p.16

be based on real feelings. Williams states that this is a song that speaks for everyday situations, and does not have any hidden meanings. It simply presents what is stated within the lyrics; love relationships going wrong.[78] The girl is not confronted with hostile feelings, because the singer realizes that an apology or regret would not change the way he feels. What he needs is, as Mellers suggests, to find the strength to carry on, even stay in solitude for a while.[79] He is trying to give a positive feeling while describing a bad incident. The line 'I'm a-thinking and a-wonderin' all the way down the road/I once loved a woman, a child I'm told/I give her my heart but she wanted my soul' raises the issue of the 'spiritual possessiveness of woman'.[80] This is an example of the powerful women depicted in Dylan's early songs. O'Dair, based on the specific line, gives the woman presented in 'Don't Think Twice' the character of a 'needy' girlfriend who wants and tries to change her man.[81]

The melody, which combines minor and major thirds with a lively pulse,[82] derives from 'Who's Gonna Buy Your Chickens When I'm Gone?',[83] and, as heard in combination with the softness of the performance indicates that the girl is treated with positive feelings, while, as Mellers adds, the immediacy of Dylan's vocal delivery gives the song the sense of hope for a new beginning, and reduces its quality as a goodbye song.[84] The speaker might have been unable to experience a fulfilling relationship, but he surely seems to experience deliverance, as he is able to leave a bad situation behind and start looking for a girl who would offer him the kind of real relationship he longs for, a

[78] Williams (i), p.58
[79] Mellers (1984)., p.128
[80] Willis, p.89
[81] O'Dair, p.82
[82] Mellers (1984), p.128
[83] Williamson, p.259
[84] Mellers (1984), p.128

positive resolution. As Bloch has argued, 'But what is true is that each and every criticism of imperfection, incompleteness, intolerance, and impatience already without a doubt presupposes the conception of, and longing for, a possible perfection.'[85]

The hope for a positive resolution is absent in 'Boots of Spanish Leather' which is a sensitive love song, a painful recognition that, as Smart suggests, someone who you love and need is determined to be somewhere else.[86] It begins as a dialogue between lovers but without being made clear who is saying what, the man or woman, something that is seen by Ricks to interestingly portray the dual partnership and split with a single voice.[87] In the first six verses Dylan recollects a dialogue between two lovers and only in the seventh verse does he distinguish the speaker to be the male party who addresses a third person to whom he talks about the letter he got from her.[88] The last two verses are spoken towards the lover, but now it is clear that she is not there. Ricks states that in the song no misogynistic elements appear, as it does not generalize the incident in any relationship between men and women.[89] Even the last stanza, as much as it has defensive character in the sense of asking for boots of Spanish leather as an exchange for her departure, is more tender and defensive than hostile. The song has a folk character Mellers identifies in the diatonic movement of the music and the melody that is built in a folk mode, which is combined with the chords III-IV-I in a way that avoids the dominant.[90] The guitar scheme sweetly surrounds the narrative. Williams observes that the romanticism of the language and the music is combined successfully with the realism

[85] Bloch (!989), p.16
[86] Smart, p.183
[87] Ricks, p.407
[88] Williams (i), p.89
[89] Ricks, p.408
[90] Mellers (1984), p.128

of the performance and the story that is being told.[91] The dialogue is not dramatized but, as Ricks puts it, it is being sung[92] by a singer whose voice sounds vulnerable and hurt, but again he painfully realizes that 'your mind is roamin'/I'm sure your heart is not with me', and this is the first step of the process that would make him leave her behind.

It is clear that Dylan in the above song describes a man who thought the woman he loved was ideal, thus he thought the relationship they shared was offering him salvation, but now he seems willing to find the strength to go on. The singer-narrator of 'Boots of Spanish Leather' appears to be quite passive, but not as passive as the speaker of 'Simple Twist of Fate' who recalls an incident where he seems to be manipulated by a woman, whose behaviour is presented as active in opposition to the inactivity of the man. The hours they spent together were as many as the hours of a single night, but he has fallen in love with her, despite the fact that she disappeared after the night was over. After the incident he becomes obsessed and loses his freedom. The 'simple twist of fate' cannot be escaped and this is emphasized, according to Negus, by the tense rising of the voice in every verse before it returns by falling introspectively to the conclusion of each verse that is always the same.[93] Even though he superficially rejects what happened, Williams suggests that it seems that he believes that this was the best thing that had happened to him.[94] The soft, mournful performance communicates the singer's feelings to the listener. The bass playing is revelatory, while the harmonica, sounding sweet and free (and contrasting with the steady pulse of the guitar), underlines, in Williams' words,

[91] Williams (i), p.89
[92] Ricks, p.408
[93] Negus, pp.:131-2.
[94] Williams (i), p.30

the song's 'essence and push it out to the furthest corners of the universe'.[95] In this brief interaction the speaker thought 'she was my twin', thus he believed that if he could acquire the woman he would be attaining a true relationship that would be fulfilling and could lead him to the desirable salvation. The ending, featuring the harmonica, underscores the vanity of human relations conveyed in the song.

In another song Dylan would sing 'You don't have to yearn for love, you don't have to be alone'. According to Gray, this line from 'We better talk this over', placed in the context of betrayal, indicates that the speaker is already looking for salvation somewhere else, since the relationship with the woman left him disappointed, and advises her to do the same.[96] He is clearly sad because of the unfaithfulness of the woman. The image of 'one hand clappin'' makes, as Mellers states, a wonderful statement of separation, isolation and loneliness.[97] Morris states that it is not clear whether the line 'Somewheres in this universe there's a place that you can call home' is sung to the woman or to himself.[98] Either way, the song does not have a negative resonance. The woman is even asked not to think of whatever they did not have, but to be grateful for all those things they shared.[99] Negus suggests that the discomforting situation described with the words is further underlined by a switch of the regular four-beat pulse to an occasional instance of a 'bar' that has five beats.[100] However, rejection can have a positive aspect on this song as it seems to lead to the acceptance of truth and the willingness to move on. Its

[95] Ibid, p.27
[96] Gray, p.218
[97] Mellers (1984), p.200
[98] Morris, p.172
[99] Mellers (1984), p.200
[100] Negus, p.144

indirect positive character is further evident, as Mellers argues, in the jazzy elements of the music, which are in balance with its 'hymnic solemnity'.[101]

'We Better Talk This Over' has a different resonance from other songs of this category, as it finds a songwriter in middle-age to be disappointed with the romantic relationships on which he was relying for his salvation, to now be ready to search for salvation in other contexts. This is a 'move-on' song that Gray sees as much different from the move-on songs Dylan wrote during the 1960s. He writes: 'in those, the gotta-move-on instinct was to do with a restlessness that he wanted to indulge not resolve, and a markedly different awareness of the restrictiveness of a relationship.'[102] In his search for an ideal relationship which is to bring about salvation, we have seen his characters to dismiss women who are not considered as able to provide the ideal relationship, as they were connected with the earthly weaknesses and faults. There were cases where his songs pointed towards a temporary utopian fulfilling relationship which only involved physical interaction. We have seen the effort to reach women who are existent but still elusive and unattainable, and also the positive and negative aspects of an interaction with spiritually powerful women who are described as goddess-like. Eventually, the idea of the everlasting love was discussed, only to lead to the conclusion that the hope for this ideal love cannot exclude the danger of not attaining it, and ending up being hurt.

This 'hope' is evident in Dylan in all respects. It is the argument of this dissertation that his songs point towards the utopian aspects of life, by inevitably combining those with real life as it is. However, he presents the 'hope' for 'salvation'. In most of his work he seems ambivalent as to where 'salvation' can be attained, and this

[101] Mellers (1981), p.149
[102] Gray, p.219

can be assumed to be the reason for the constant shifting of the musical styles and conceptual contexts of his songs. But towards the end of the 1970s Dylan seems to know his next destination. The next album he released after *Street Legal* – on which 'We Better Talk this Over' was featured – was the Christian *Slow Train Coming*, which depicts how Dylan now deliberately turns to the Christian faith for his deliverance. As has already been clarified, it is not necessary to look at those overtly Christian years of Dylan's work in a separate chapter, as religiosity is another shifting point in Dylan's work that hovers, however, in all his output and is commented throughout the dissertation whenever appropriate. The next chapter will deal with Dylan's search for paradise, or else, his Utopia; an existing or non-existing location, spiritual or mental that can provide a sense of salvation and fulfillment. The running theme will be Dylan's search for home; for what can be seen as a personal heaven.

Chapter IV

‘There are no Sins inside the Gates of Eden’: The Place of Salvation

We finished the previous chapter by commenting on how Dylan with his songs reveals the ‘hope’ for the achievement of a fulfilling, even utopian, love relationship. Throughout the previous chapter there are comments on how the concept of love relationships is associated with religion. Indeed, Dylan’s struggle to attain the ideal relationship can be related to his search for religious salvation and, consequently, his attempt to reach what can be perceived as heavenly paradise, the special place where souls are considered to go after life comes to an end. The idea of salvation is generally connected with the notion of heaven, the utopian ideal place someone has to reach to find peace and happiness. Dylan in many cases is dealing in his songs with the issue of places, of movement and the idea of home, in a way that seems central for his creativity; he seems to be dealing with the issue of places as locations – either existent or imaginary – of utopia and dystopia, able to provide a sense of security and salvation or the exact opposite. In Dylan’s songs places, as is to be seen in this chapter, are treated either from a negative perspective, as being distant from the desired Edenic condition, or being pictured as earthly paradises. To reach them, someone must constantly move ‘like a rolling stone’, trying to find a ‘home’, the place to be safe; Dylan’s work does not always give positive possibilities even for the arrival at the ‘direction home’. In his songs there is always the ambivalence, as Morris suggests, as to whether the idea of home is indeed believed to exist or whether it is only

presented in words.[1] Home in this context should not be considered by using the conventional notion of the word, but it should rather be seen as one's desirable destination, a place where fulfilment and, consequently, the sense of salvation, can be achieved.

In addressing the issue of how Dylan is dealing with the notion of places we shall see his awareness of locations – either existent or not – that create insecurity, places to be left, places to be reached, the consideration of positive and negative aspects of the city and the country side and, finally, the movement to the spiritual path that is to lead to the final destination of man. For doing this, I shall consider songs from the entire output of his prolific work, and, in this chapter no specific period of his work is to be emphasized, as the movement towards the desirable place is a recurrent theme throughout his work. In this chapter I shall begin with the issue of the constant, perpetual movement towards somewhere that can be named home, or the ideal place, or Utopia, or towards somewhere unknown that is to be revealed through the process of movement, a journey carried out in hope of finding a better place. Perpetual movement has again an important connection with utopian thought, and this is noted by Eugene O'Brien, when commenting on how in Thomas More's *Utopia* descriptions of utopias are put into the mouth of a traveller named Raphael Hythloday, writing: 'The fact that Hythloday is a traveler is of note; for the connection between the utopian vision with its sense of the placeless, or with an enabling concept of space, and the movement toward, or discovery of, that no-place is an ongoing trope in this discourse.'[2] It needs to be made clear at this point that every utopian

[1] Morris, p.172

[2] Eugene O'Brien, 'Towards Justice to Come: Derrida and Utopian Justice' in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan (eds.) (Bern: Peter Lang , 2007), p.44

goal always has to be seen as an ongoing, never-ending journey towards its achievement; this certainly seems to be the case with Dylan's search for salvation. As has been indicated several times in the course of this dissertation, Dylan is an artist who never settles down, constantly shifting musical styles and conceptual contexts, as well as world views. Seen in this context, his use of the imagery of perpetual movement is hardly surprising.

Perpetual Movement

Ever since the beginning of his career, as Ellen Willis has argued, before his electric turn, the personal songs Dylan wrote had the restlessness and nostalgia of an outlaw, who, unable to stay in a single place and committed to a single woman was constantly moving. This is why the central element of those early personal songs is the image of the road.[3] The image of the road and of constant movement, as has been discussed earlier, will remain persistent in his work until the latest albums of his so-called 'Modern Era'[4]. Dylan's tendency for constant movement is defined by Elliott as aligned with the idea of 'the poetics of displacement', through which he 'seeks to challenge and destabilize any sense of permanence even as it simultaneously relies on a set of quilted, temporary, memory sites'.[5] To begin with an example, the speaker of 'If dogs run free' from *New Morning* seems to be jealous of the dogs' ability to run free because this is a picture of life going on, as interpreted by 'If dogs run free, then what must be,/ Must be and that is all'. The song might at one level be referring to the positive aspects of true love, but,

[3] Willis, p.89
[4] Dylan's 'Modern Era' is considered as the three albums *Time Out of Mind* (1997), *'Love and Theft'* (2001) and *Modern Times* (2006).
[5] Richard Elliott, 'The Same Distant Places: Bob Dylan's Poetics of Place and Displacement' in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group: May, 2009), p.250

since at another level the image of dogs running free is evoking the sense of freedom and homelessness, the song is ambivalent as to its meaning. Shelton suggests that the song is a 'frontier of personal freedom'[6]; 'the apotheosis of personal contentment in a love relationship.'[7] The song opens with piano intro in free jazzy style. The piano keeps playing during the whole song without being always in time, while it remains always fast and elusive, reflecting the speaker's thoughts about freedom. Freedom is also evoked with the sound of the female backing vocals, which engages scat to be in dialogue with the singer. The whole song gives the sense of a calm blues while all its sound evokes a sense of elusiveness. Dylan's voice on this occasion is calm and he sings with confidence. Dylan, in this song seems to place the ability to be free and in perpetual movement higher than a true love and a home.

Some years earlier, Dylan released the song 'Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again', giving a contradictory sense with a single phrase; while 'stuck' is an expression of stillness and mobile is an expression of movement it seems improbable for someone to be stuck in mobile.[8] At the same time with this song he seems to be referring to the bad happenings that were taking place in the South United States, as Mobile is a town in the state of Alabama.[9] However, it can be said that Dylan is artistically 'stuck inside of mobile' as is understood by his constant shifting between musical styles. Back to the song, while Smart reads the refrain as a definition of place as somewhere you must leave from,[10] Shelton states that the song, aligned with the blues and country song traditions, comprises a lamentation for places which have been left

[6] Shelton, p.420
[7] Ibid, p.376
[8] This suggestion is not mine, and was definitely read somewhere I unfortunately cannot recall.
[9] This suggestion was made by Max Paddison in one of our discussions about the specific song.
[10] Smart, p.179

behind.[11] Both interpretations can be taken into account; places are indeed locations needing to be left, but the memories of them cannot be abandoned. It seems that Dylan believes that everyone must be in perpetual movement, collecting memories from each place that will add up to his experience and development. Indeed, as Smart argues, the refrain shows fear of and longing for place at one and the same time.[12] The sound is full and joyous, and the song's meaning of displacement and alienation is not only revealed through the words. As Marshall argues, the way Dylan performs the song – as for instance when he says to Ruthie 'Ah, c'mon now', and also the delivery of the refrain which gives force to the words, as well as the way he puts emphasis on the lyrics – is the element that creates the song's meaning.[13]

However, Dylan does not suggest that perpetual movement has only positive results. In the process of movement, one has to be able to accept the risk of missed opportunities. This is the warning Dylan gives to his beloved when he states 'Well, I wanna be your lover, baby, I don't wanna be your boss. Don't say I never warned you when your train gets lost' in 'It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry' from *Highway 61 Revisited*. At the same time, all the images shown in the words might be memories of a specific place, recalled by the speaker as he 'ride[s] on a mailtrain', being 'up all night, baby,/Leanin' on the window sill.' It seems that the speaker could not wait for the girl's positive answer, as he had to keep moving. The necessity for movement is one of the thematic issues of the songs of the blues tradition. And, as Shelton states, this is a traditional blues song which has the feeling of old times and even the way Dylan

[11] Shelton, p.323
[12] Smart, p.190
[13] Marshall, p.28-9

performs it is straightforward blues.[14] The long harmonica solo at the end, which never does conclude but is continued until the fade out of the music, enhances the feeling of movement, restlessness and the continuity of everything. There is a hint of hopelessness and negativity as far as the direction is concerned, in the line 'Well, if I die/On top of the hill/And if I don't make it/You know my baby will'. It seems that this time the place left behind has had such a strong impact on him that, after he leaves, he does not know if what is to be encountered next could possibly be better than what he has just left.

The speaker of 'Down the Highway' on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, engaged in his perpetual movement on the highway after being abandoned by his girl is 'bound to get lucky, baby/Or I'm bound to die tryin''. He will be walking down the highway, moving constantly 'From the Golden Gate Bridge/All the way to the Statue of Liberty', using the image of liberty as an image of the liberated self he aims to be after he gets over her. 'Down the Highway' might be considered to be Dylan's authentic composition, but it is a song which, as Mellers suggests, is heavily influenced by the blues tradition.[15] However, the way his guitar playing replies to – and functions with – the words is heartfelt and adds up to the feeling of the song. As Shelton argues it 'has a distinctive modal lay, unified by a stunning guitar figure exuding shivering mournfulness.'[16] Dylan's vocal delivery is very meaningful as his voice breaks at certain moments and creates a heartfelt performance which, despite the song's musical and melodic simplicity, generates the feeling of entrapment and inability for emotional escape. However, Dylan is usually 'closin' the book/On the pages and the text/And I don't really care/What happens next'. His stance will always remain to be 'Going, Going, Gone', to always have the possibility

[14] Shelton, p.280
[15] Mellers (1984), p.128
[16] Shelton, p.155

to exit any situation and place. Mellers writes that the inner sadness of the song is created by the musical treatment; the way that it tonally rounds but never certainly settles on D. The only evident and certain tone shifting is in C and occurs when the speaker's grandmother advises him to find his true love and stay with her, but, since this does not happen, the song returns to its confusing and dispiriting character.[17] Again there is no specific direction for the person who is 'going'.

Bringin' it all back Home

As is evident from the songs discussed above, Dylan's art praises the sense of perpetual movement. However, as it is to be seen now, the sense of home is also hovering in his songs. Home in Dylan is usually presented as a place longed for, some place to be reached and not one left behind. Elliott cites Dylan saying in the opening of *No Direction Home*, the film by Martin Scorsese,

> I had ambitions to set out and find like an odyssey, going home somewhere. I set out to find this home that I'd left a while back and I couldn't remember exactly where it was but I was on my way there, and encountering what I encountered on the way was how I envisioned it all. I didn't really have any ambition at all…I was born very far from where I'm supposed to be and so I'm on my way home.[18]

The position Dylan takes here could well be regarded as his artistic stance. He has been moving 'Like a Rolling Stone' to find a certain 'place' to settle, a spiritual 'home'; he is constantly in the position of *Bringin' It All Back Home*. In 'If I Don't Be There by Morning', for example, a song co-written by Dylan and Helena Springs and released by

[17] Mellers (1984), p.174
[18] Elliott, p.256

Eric Clapton on the 1978 album *Backless,* the speaker is heading towards home to his woman, but he is ambivalent as to whether he is going to reach her. The woman on this occasion represents 'home', a stable state and place in someone's life; and the speaker, despite the fact that he has her on his mind and he seems positive to return to her, at the same time gives rather a negative possibility for his return, with 'Well, if I don't be there by morning/I guess that I never will'. However, he wants her to think of him and wait for him still; he needs to have the possibility to return 'home'.

There is a song that clearly shows the traveler's ambivalence as to whether he should return to home security or keep on traveling. 'I was young when I left home/And I been out ramblin' round/And I never wrote a letter to my home/To my home/Lord, to my home/And I never wrote a letter to my home' Dylan sings in 'I was Young when I left Home'.[19] The later references to the element of the 'wind' strengthen the image of traveling Dylan wants to create with phrases like 'Gonna make me a home out in the wind'; however, as stated by Elliott, the ambivalence occurs from the fact that whilst the speaker dreamt of constant traveling when at home, he appears to be longing for a home when facing the difficulties of traveling.[20] The ambivalence of the song is musically highlighted by the fact that lyrics and music do not seem to fit properly.[21] Even the voice Dylan uses for this song is the 'Okie' accent he used the first years in New York when he adopted the persona of a traveler, influenced by Woody Guthrie. As Pichaske has argued, apart from stating names of places in the lyrics, a place can also be hinted at by the sound of a song, the musical treatment and the vocal delivery. One important way for doing this

[19] Ibid: The song was recorded in 1961 and was circulated as a bootleg for long, but never officially released until it appeared as a bonus track on *'Love and Theft'*.
[20] Ibid
[21] Ibid

is also the pronunciation.[22] Frith speaks about the linguistic fitness which is common in popular music songs. For example, folk singers employ 'quasi-rural' accents, reggae singers Jamaican accent and European rappers try to mimic the sound of the New York streets.[23] Bob Dylan, for example, during his folk years, engaged a vocal delivery similar to the one of Folk singers like Woody Guthrie.

In 'I was Young when I left Home', as we have seen, Dylan uses the idea of home with its conventional notion, as somewhere from where you leave and not as the image for a place to be reached in order to achieve the desirable fulfilment. This might be the reason why he approaches 'home' this time with feelings of nostalgia – and nostalgia can be linked with the notion of Utopia. The way Dylan nostalgically recalls his home bring Bloch's discussion of paintings of the Dutch School: 'A lot of homey everyday life is painted in the Dutch genre picture, but with all its closeness it is also designed in a way as a ship's captain would see it from afar when he thinks of home: as a miniature that carries homesickness in itself.'[24] Dylan the traveler, the man that supports perpetual movement because he is constantly on the quest for the 'home' – the one to be reached and not the one left behind – might at times approach the notion of home with the nostalgic feelings that conquer a captain's mind when thinking of 'homey everyday life'. However, unlike any captain, Dylan would not like a return to the home left behind, as, such a return would put an end to his journey towards Utopia – the desirable home of his quest. And, as can be seen with 'I was Young when I left Home', this can be the reason for his decision not to return there – as much as he states that he misses the security

[22] Pichaske (2009), p.149
[23] Frith (1996), p.166
[24] Bloch (1989), p.280

provided there – and his desire to keep traveling, because through the journey the actual 'home' can be found.

Living in the City, Longing for the Country side

Home is not given a specific location in Dylan's songs; it is not clear whether the longed for home, if it exists, is located in a specific place, but there is a certain preference for the virtues of countryside rather than city life. According to Pichaske, Dylan's generation experienced the betrayal of the idealism of the American dream, and, being unsatisfied by the present situation of their nation, they looked for an idealized present where they could fit the past; this could only be achieved away from the East, where all the politics and revolution in town were taking place.[25] Harvey comments on the nostalgic stance of the utopian thinking by also bringing to the fore Thomas More's *Utopia*: 'More, by contrast, evokes nostalgia for a mythological past, a perfected golden age of small-town living, a stationary-state moral order and a hierarchical mode of social relating that is non-conflictual and harmonious.', while he proceeds to state that 'This nostalgic strain is characteristic of much utopian thinking, even that projected into the future and, incorporating futuristic technologies.'[26] Levitas is also supportive of this position, commenting on how utopian imagery inevitably acquires a nostalgic vision of the past. She writes: 'Such images are embedded in origin and destination myths, where the good life is not available to us in this world but is confined to a lost golden age or a world beyond death.'[27]

[25] David Pichaske, 'Bob Dylan and the Search for the Past' in *All Along the Telegraph: A Bob Dylan Handbook* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987), p.106
[26] Harvey, p.160
[27] Levitas, p.1

In Mid-Western locations, which are pictured as the countryside, people were living 'practical' lives. Dylan had a positive attitude to that and this is why he considers the Mid-West as a place of pastoral tradition and the redemption of nature.[28] Pichaske argues that countryside on many occasions is pictured as place of renewal and salvation, as evoked by the virtues of nature given in 'Lay down Your Weary Tune'.[29] Marshall suggests that the adoption of folk ideologies, as is the location of good virtues in the Wild West and the corruption in the cities of the East is something mostly evident in the first years of Dylan's career.[30] 'Let me Die in my Footsteps' is a relevant example, a song which, as Smart states, pictures the places someone is willing to travel in order not to be confined.[31] 'Let me Die in my Footsteps' speaks about the grace of nature, especially with the last stanza, with the lyrics 'Go out in your country where the land meets the sun/See the craters and the canyons where the waterfalls run/ Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho/Let every state in this union seep down deep in your souls/And you'll die in your footsteps/Before you go down under the ground'. Dylan's affinity with nature is also apparent, according to Pichaske, in such later songs as 'Modern Times', where he finds grace 'In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand' and 'Thunder on the Mountain' which concludes with Dylan heading north to plant and harvest whatever nature will give him.[32] However, there are cases where Dylan recognizes that nature can also be dangerous, like 'All along the Watchtower', 'Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall', 'Shelter from the Storm', 'Idiot Wind' etc and that the country people of the Midwest are not

[28] Pichaske (2009), p.154: Dylan's preference for the practical life is also evident in his dedication to family life and the care for the community spirit, without abandoning the sense of self-awareness.
[29] Ibid, p.155
[30] Marshall (2007), p.67
[31] Smart, p.182
[32] Pichaske (2009), p.156

always more innocent than people from the cities, like in the songs on *Good as I Been to You* and *World Gone Wrong*.[33]

One of the two original Dylan compositions from the first album he released, 'Talkin' New York', is a strong example of the folk attitude of Dylan as a young artist, as far as the city and country discrimination is concerned. The first two lines picture a pure American justice located in the towns of the Wild West and opposes that with the present of the city which is full of bad and unjust people.[34] Musically it is a simple talkin' blues, which however approaches the cruelty of a place with a humorous and energetic temperament. The speaker abandons the city in the last stanza and 'headed out for the western skies'. He certainly does not consider New York as a place where he would be able to find salvation.

'I'm stranded in the city that never sleeps/Some of these women they just give me the creeps' sings Dylan to open 'Honest with Me' heard on *'Love and Theft'*. The speaker, as Child suggests, cannot easily accept the people, experiences and environmental complexity he encounters in the city.[35] Additionally, the city is stripped of ethics, as everything there is for sale, something indicated with the lyric 'You say my eyes are pretty and my smile is nice/Well, I'll sell it to ya at a reduced price'.[36] The music of the song strengthens the sense of unease evident from the lyrics with its raucousness and the combination of rumbling rhythm with tense guitar slides.[37] The image of the city, as Harvey writes, is commonly related to the notion of dystopia – the

[33] Ibid, p.156
[34] Pichaske (1987), p.102
[35] Ben Child, 'Raised in the Country, Working in the Town: Temporal and Spatial Modernisms in Bob Dylan's '*Love and Theft*' in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group: May, 2009), p.205
[36] Ibid
[37] Ibid

opposite idea of the one of utopia – which is to be a place with negative resonance, and it is also related with the notion of hell:

> The figure of the city as a fulcrum of social disorder, moral breakdown, and unmitigated evil – from Babylon to Sodom and Gomorrah to Gotham – also has its place in the freight of metaphorical meanings that the word 'city' carries across our cultural universe.[38]

Dylan's vocal delivery in the song under consideration is aggressive and insecure at the same time, being defensively threatening. The speaker here is a person who wanted to leave his country hometown in order to meet other possibilities, and, yet, he meets the environment of the city with disappointment, as 'another prison to break out of'.[39] On this occasion, neither the country nor the city can give him the opportunity for fulfillment.

Similarly, 'Day of the Locusts' creates positive feelings for the countryside, but eventually provides it with a dark undertone. The song has an autobiographical resonance, as it speaks about the honorary degree given to Dylan by Princeton University, a qualification he approaches with humour and no pride.[40] The speaker does not want to be in this environment, and the sound of the locusts singing makes it evident that he would prefer being in a more rural environment. The lyrics 'I put down my robe, picked up my diploma/Took hold of my sweetheart and away we did drive/Straight for the hills, the black hills of Dakota/Sure was glad to get out of there alive' state, as Pichaske argues, preference of countryside over cities, labor over capital and earnestness

[38] Harvey, pp.156-7
[39] Child, p.205
[40] Ricks, p.192

over institutional education.[41] The story is approached with humour and there is a meaningful time in the vocal delivery, in the way the word 'alive' is performed, which evokes the sense of freedom. However, Mellers suggests that, as the speaker and his girl are heading to the hill, the resonance of the sound of the locusts takes another form since the hills are 'black' and the 'sweet melody' of the insects gives him 'a chill'.[42] Thus, his movement towards the hills might be deliberating, but it also seems to be threatening. Even nature does not create the desirable sense of security and Dylan, with his honorary diploma in hand and his girl by his side longs for an earthly paradise which is unlikely to be found yet. As Marqusee writes about 'Day of the Locusts': 'Forever uneasy in the role assigned to him, Dylan was still grappling with the authentic, still looking – like Woody Guthrie in the Rainbow Room – for salvation in some distant, imagined America'.[43]

'…Nothing here now to hold them': Places that someone has to Leave

To take Marqusee's statement a bit further, since Dylan's search for salvation is placed in 'some distant, imagined America', this means that the present world he inhabits is not considered as being satisfactory. In Dylan's output there are many songs that suggest that when a place seems unsatisfactory and prevents someone from living the way he wants and be creative, giving him limited possibilities for achieving his goals, then that place must be abandoned. In 'North Country Blues', for example, a story about the decline of a mining town, which was discussed in Chapter I, Dylan finds the opportunity to indirectly make an autobiographical reference to Hibbing, a place from where children must leave,

[41] Pichaske (2009), p.155
[42] Mellers (1984), p.169
[43] Marqusee, p.271

as ‘there ain’t nothing here to hold ‘em’.[44] Indeed, as Shelton points out, Dylan was not really connected with his hometown, and this is also proven by the fact that after four years he had not visited Hibbing, he returned there because he wanted to attend his father’s funeral.[45] As Dylan writes in *Chronicles I*, his hometown had an influence to his development, but, as an artist he had to move forward.[46] Shelton writes that:

> Hibbing was small-town Minnesota, his incubus and touchstone, home of provincialism, isolation, back-water Babbittry, and conservatism. Dylan could say, ‘Hibbing’s got nothing to do with what I am, what I became’, and yet sometimes reveal that his flight from small-town Philistinism had supplied motive, energy, ferocious drive and, and will.[47]

Kristen and Young, on the other hand, state that Hibbing during Dylan’s growing up years was not the repressive and banal place we all consider it to be, as, surprisingly, it has a monumental High School where, in Dylan’s high school days, an English teacher ‘instilled a deep and disciplined love of literature and knowledge in generations of students’.[48] One, then, could assume that what pushed Dylan away from his hometown was not the lack of interest and opportunities of the place, but his inner tendency to find the ideal place to call home, or to stay constantly in the process of searching for it. This was merely because the place he inhabited, and, consequently, someone could say the place he describes in ‘North Country Blues’ is a place of confinement, where an individual’s development is threatened.

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[44] Peter Kame, ‘Boy Wonder’ in *Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Back Pages*, Blake, Mark (ed.), Bono (Foreword), (London: DK Publishing, 2005), p.18
[45] Shelton, p.59
[46] Smart, p.181
[47] Shelton, p.24
[48] Susanne Kristen and Stephen Dine Young, ‘A Foreign Sound to Your Ear: The Influence of Bob Dylan’s Music on American and German-Speaking Fans’ in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, May: 2009), p.229

The same mood of disappointment from the current place is evoked when hearing the lyrics 'What's wrong with me? I don't have much to say' of 'Watching the River Flow'. Williams sees the first stanza as conveying the element of timelessness, of spending the night awake until the dawn somewhere.[49] The speaker does not speak negatively about the place he is at present, but he recognizes that it does not make him happy, and that he definitely would like to be somewhere else. In fact, he knows exactly which the desirable place is, and, as he states in the song, if he had wings he would go there, but, he seems unable to do it. The speaker himself might be unable to move in this case, and this is why he will stay watching the river flow, since 'Oh, this ol' river keeps on rollin', though/No matter what gets in the way and which way the wind does blow'. The flowing of the river helps his imagination to keep flowing, since his body is unable to. As Williams suggests, in the specific song Dylan's ability in the sense of timing is apparent.[50] Ricks states that the song's rhythm and vocal performance is rough, and, despite the resonance of the title, the sound is not flowing.[51] The guitar riffs are effective. He cannot move but he creates the sense of perpetual movement with the river's image and he seems to be ready to move at the moment he finds the opportunity. Again commenting on Dutch paintings, Bloch states that 'Space is meant for closeness.'[52] Dylan in 'Watching the River Flow', of course is providing a relief from the feeling of closeness and confinement by introducing the paradox of the image of the flowing river as opposed to the speaker's situation who sits still, with not much to say, just waiting for his movement to a better place. In this respect, 'Watching the River Flow' cannot be

[49] Williams (i), p.261
[50] Ibid
[51] Ricks, p.116
[52] Bloch (1989), p.280

described as the rejection for a place, but it is rather describing a dissatisfaction for a place where someone is trapped and, though dreaming of leaving, he is unable to; the place described is not presented as negative, but as unsatisfactory and, consequently, as a place that can hardly provide one with salvation and fulfillment.

On the other hand, 'On the Road Again' Dylan finds the opportunity to reject a place, a home which a group of characters who represent the political power, a group of 'bullying lunatics' inhabit. Marqusee relates the imagery of 'On the Road Again' with the notion of dystopia: '…war and violence in general remain nullifying horrors in Dylan's mid-sixties dystopia…Chaos and destruction are not confined in foreign fields; in 'On the Road Again', they intrude into everyday life[.]'[53] Here again, as Smart argues, we have the presentation of the grotesque as descriptions of the girl's family, the residents of the house the speaker would never stay in, despite the fact that the girl asks him to.[54] Instead, after clarifying that he would never stay there, he suggests her to move out from there. The musical untidiness of this song is a common characteristic of early rock music. As Shelton states, it has thrusting beat and its opposing riff overrides everything.[55] Even Dylan's voice here evokes the sense of freedom and rejection of everything depicted in the song; in every refrain he seems to scorn what he describes.

What is evident through the discussion of the above songs is that none of the three locations described in 'North Country Blues', 'Watching the River Flow' and 'On the Road Again' are considered by Dylan as to be places that someone should stay in, as they are treated as places that offer no possibilities for a person. However, they are not described like threatening places which evoke the sense of insecurity.

[53] Marqusee, p.166
[54] Smart, p.185
[55] Shelton, p.273

‘This Place don’t Make Sense to me no More’: Places of Insecurity

I now turn to discuss some songs in which Dylan presents places and locations where the song protagonists feel insecure and from where the sense of safety is excluded. In these places, as they are pictured to evoke such negative feelings, one cannot attain salvation. ‘Señor (Tales of Yankee Power)’ opens with lyrics that speak about movement and place: ‘Señor, senor, do you know where we’re heading?/Lincoln County Road or Armageddon?’ evoking metaphorically the sense of a humanity heading towards destruction, due to the political situation. Here, Pichaske’s suggestion that Lincoln County Road describes the good politics of the former president of USA, while Armageddon as destination gives the sense of bad ending, can be brought to the fore.[56] Obviously stuck in a single room keeping his eyes ‘glued to the door’, accompanied by his frightening thoughts about the world and the memories of his lost woman, Dylan gives the room a universal character and cries to Señor that ‘this place don’t make sense to me no more’. ‘No more’ might be an indication that before the realizations about the world and the loss of the woman the place did make sense to him, but now no security can be located there. The painful realization comes with the fact that this room is the whole world and the speaker cannot find a place which would ‘make sense to him’. Musically the song has a rather mystical character and, supporting the word ‘Señor’, it has a Texan-Spanish character. Vocally and musically this room in which the speaker is located seems to be drowning him – and the audience alike. The song’s musical character is universal, and since the room is drowning him, and the room reflects the whole world, then the speaker in this case is doomed.

[56] Pichaske (2009), p.149

Similarly with 'Señor', Dylan has used a single room to depict the whole world in some other songs as well. For example, in 'Bob Dylan's Dream', the singer's memories of the things left behind and the friends he has lost are evoked in a dream he has while riding on a train and going west. He dreams of his good times that are placed in a single room, a small confined place which thus can fit happiness. With the dream he has, according to Pichaske, Dylan praises the virtues of simplicity, poorness and unity against the scornful results of complexity, wealth and multiplicity.[57] Bulson suggests that the song is about growing up, the exchange of innocence with experience. Shelton agrees, by stating that '[t]he song is imbued with nostalgia, world-weariness at twenty-one, a feeling of lost innocence.'[58] Shelton argues that Dylan has credited Martin Carthy's traditional singing of 'Lord Franklin' for the melody of the song.[59] The vocal delivery and harmonica breaks are both nostalgic and the general simplicity of the song is depicting a simple situation which, thus, meant so many positive things for the singer. 'Bob Dylan's dream' is a song in which the sense of nostalgia is strongly evident. And, as has been indicated above in the chapter, Harvey states that the nostalgic feeling is directly associated with the utopian thinking.[60] However, despite his nostalgic emotions, Dylan does not seem willing to revisit the past. As Bulson writes, 'For Dylan the freewheeler, looking back was just fine, but going back was out of the question'.[61] However, going back might not be what he longs for, but there is the acknowledgment that the specific

[57] Pichaske (1987), p.104
[58] Shelton, p.156
[59] Ibid
[60] Harvey, p.160
[61] Eric Bulson, 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.130

room – as described in the song – was a place of fulfillment for the speaker at the time he was with his friends.

There is no indication for the geographical location of the room, clearly stating that a place of fulfillment can be anywhere in the world; fulfillment comes from the experience one place can offer. On the contrary, the room Mr. Jones enters in 'Ballad of a Thin Man' is also a whole universe of grotesque and weird experiences, a room obviously the man does not understand and where he surely cannot attain fulfillment unless he manages to trespass or understand it, while the room in which the speaker of 'Visions of Johanna' lies can fit all the world of his thoughts and his imagination about the vision of the woman that conquers him. Rooms are confined places but Dylan, when builds them with his songs, can make them big enough to fit someone's world.

Back to the issue of feeling insecure in the current place of location: 'Wanted Man'[62] has as its subject matter a man who, according to the lyrics, 'Wherever you might look tonight, you might see this wanted man'. Negus states that this song was co-written with Johnny Cash.[63] On the one hand the song speaks about the artist's need to act constantly as if he is 'on the lam'.[64] The insecurity rises, as Smart argues, from the fact that, while in places we can be found (something not always desirable), we can also be lost, as supported by 'I got sidetracked in El Paso, stopped to get myself a map/Went the wrong way into Juarez with Juanita on my lap/Then I went to sleep in Shreveport, woke up in Abilene/Wonderin' why the hell I'm wanted at some town halfway between'.[65]

[62] We would not normally add this song to the context of this dissertation, as, whilst written by Dylan, it was not performed by him, but it is evident that the song's content significantly relates to the issue under consideration in this chapter.
[63] Negus, p.86
[64] Smart, p.180
[65] Ibid

Any place creates insecurity to this 'wanted man', as 'there's somebody set to grab me anywhere that I might be'. The song is in simple country style, and Johnny Cash's performance is straight-forward. No place is described as safe for this man, he can be lost and found anywhere, with no possible escape, and neither one of these situations is preferred, thus, the song does not offer, at least as far as the lyrics are concerned, any possibility for salvation.

'Goin' to Acapulco': Places to be reached

When someone inhabits places where he feels confined and insecure he longs for an escape and he constantly thinks of places he wants to reach where he would eventually manage to reach happiness and fulfillment. Such places in Dylan's work are sometimes presented specifically, sometimes not, sometimes given names, and sometimes only descriptions, and are places where a person might find the perfect situation. To begin with an example: the speaker of 'Goin' to Acapulco', by claiming as an excuse a woman's presence, is joyously stating that the (unmentioned) place where he happens to be at the moment does not offer him any kind of deliverance – bodily or mentally and spiritually – and this is why he decides to visit Rose Marie, who is located in Acapulco, a place where he can 'have some fun'. Shelton places this song in the category of those songs on *The Basement Tapes* which are 'tinctured with the search for salvation'.[66] Marqusee agrees, and writes that: 'Escape and escapism are among the dominant themes of the Basement Tapes, but there is always an ambivalence – about the possibility, desirability or permanence of escape'.[67] The song is slow, musically calm, but vocally

[66] Shelton, p.384
[67] Marqusee, p.216

tense. The tension of the voice shows that the singer's need for this journey is not unimportant, a need further strengthened by the use of backing vocals at the refrain. Acapulco in this song can be seen as holding the same meaning as Cythera in Watteau's *Embarquement pour Cythère*. Watteau, according to Bloch, has depicted the 'feeling of erotic longing' as a 'departure, a travel of love'.[68] He goes on to write: 'Therefore every depiction of the erotic distant world already expresses seduction.' and, commenting on Watteau's painting, he observes: 'Young gentlemen and young ladies are waiting for the bark that will bring them to the island of love'.[69]

Acapulco is, like the place described in 'Mozambique', a sunny, positive location. But the latter, co-written with Helena Springs, is a simple song as far as the lyrics are concerned, which shows that the situation in Mozambique is generally calm and peaceful. The people of this land are also considered to be ideal people, as they live free. The song ends with the lines 'And you see why it is so unique to be/Among the lovely people living free/Upon the beach of sunny Mozambique'. The music, having the Spanish-music elements that characterize *Desire*, especially heard with the effect of the fiddle, joyously depicts the grace that can be found in Mozambique. The voices of the two singers work so well together that they fit this description perfectly. Mozambique can be seen from the perspective of Utopia and, as Bloch says when commenting on Watteau's painting, 'the departure for Cythera is only alluded to where the anticipation of desire is represented, with gardens completely other than those on the solidly existing land.'[70] Thus, 'Mozambique', while acquiring a specific name and location, might not be an earthly place, because it is pictured in the song as flawless and in a positive light only, something

[68] Bloch (1989), p.281
[69] Ibid
[70] Ibid, p.282

that earthly places are unlikely to be able to communicate so completely. The song ends with a fade of the dialogue between the fiddle and the rest of the instruments, indicating the feeling that even if we leave Mozambique, the place will remain the same, and we will have the opportunity to visit it again. As in the previous song, Dylan recognizes that you cannot stay for long in places like those, in 'magical land' as he describes Mozambique, and this is why you have to take advantage of every experience you can have there, try to be renewed and reborn before you enter your ordinary world again and wait for the next visit to your 'Mozambique'.

In 'Outlaw Blues', Dylan, as Tamarin states, 'wants to go away to some Australian mountain range where uncool people can't find him and kill his spirit, like Robert Ford killed Jesse James'.[71] He does not have a reason for wanting to be specifically in some Australian mountain range, but this move will bring him a change which seems to be necessary for the moment. Whether this change will give him deliverance from the problems he obviously faces in his current place is something that is not clear, as everyday problems are carried within us wherever we might go. It is a 12-bar blues, in fast barrel-house style, which Dylan sings with what Mellers calls a 'black' voice.[72] The overall sound of it is highly energetic, and evokes the image of movement and change. 'Outlaw Blues' ends with the lines 'I got a woman in Jackson/I ain't gonna say her name/She's a brown skin woman, but I/Love her just the same'. Throughout Dylan's work, the location of women in different places in such a way to make the place a helpful means to describe a relationship, or give a negative or positive resonance to it, is a common device, and is further discussed in Appendix V.

[71] Jean Tamarin, 'Bringing It All Back Home' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.134
[72] Mellers (1984), p.135

Existing and Non-existing Places

As Elliott mentions, Dylan uses poetics of place in the whole corpus of his work, through mentioning of real and non-existing places, locating his songs in identifiable places which help the audience identify with the texts.[73] When Dylan gives a specific place name in his songs he does this in such a way that the place functions to the song's meaning and atmosphere. For example, this is the case with 'Highway 61 Revisited'. Shelton informs us that the US Highway 61 passes from Duluth through Minneapolis before reaching Wisconsin toward Mississippi, which is the country of blues.[74] The imaginative happenings presented in 'Highway 61 Revisited' create a scenery where, as Smart argues, someone can even murder and name his action a sacrifice, or is also able to disobey God.[75] It is the place where Mack the Finger can abandon 'forty red white and blue shoe strings and a thousand telephones that don't ring' and where a next world war could be organized. The 'Highway 61', as is described in this song, is a place where weird facts can take place; it is given a frightening character and is used to depict a place of the absurd, which, since it cannot be interpreted, it can hardly provide any sense of security. The music of the song is energetic and, while humorous, at times threatening, and, as the name of the Highway hints, is in blues style. The vocal performance sounds playful at moments, providing a sense of relief for everything going on in the words, making all the absurd descriptions sound as jokes.

Another truly existent street is used by Dylan in 'Positively 4th Street'; this is the road in the centre of Greenwich Village. This time an actual place is not used

[73] Elliott, p.250
[74] Shelton, p.281
[75] Smart, p.188

allegorically, but specifically; it makes it easier for the speaker to locate the experiences that lead to the writing of the specific song to a certain place. The song's speaker speaks aggressively about a betrayed friendship in a way that also reminds of an open letter that, according to Williams, could also function as an answer to Dylan's critics.[76] Ricks states that the identity of the friend addressed is not being specified in the song, as it is an unimportant issue; not even the gender of the person is stated.[77] Ricks goes on to argue – based on the written form of the song – that the two first and two last groups of four lyrics (stanzas) do not present any questions, while all the questions presented in the rest of the song are placed as affirmations, with no question marks.[78] This could be seen as a denial from Dylan's part to give the opportunity to the person addressed to defend himself. However, the language used is simple and plain.[79] As Shelton puts it, this is one of the 'middle-period' songs that constitute 'an artist's declaration of independence.'[80] Even the organ intro of the song is aggressive; the voice sounds scorning and ironic, but the song is simple, effective and sheds confidence. The name of the street is only used as a title and never mentioned in the words of the song, but it is enough for the audience to understand that Dylan considered it to be a place of bad experiences where no retribution can be attained, as, if people there would act in such an unjust way, then they would better be avoided.

'Build me a cabin in Utah/Marry me a wife, catch rainbow trout/Have a bunch of kids who call me "Pa"/That must be what it's all about' Dylan sings in 'Sign on the Window'; Dylan here locates a desirable situation to a specific place, giving it an

[76] Williams (i), p.159
[77] Ricks, p.65
[78] Ibid, p.64-65
[79] Williams (i), p.159
[80] Shelton, p.264

achievable character and the sense that his wish could be fulfilled. This last stanza comprises the relief for the word 'Lonely' that appears in the beginning of the song to be written on the window,[81] and the disappointment shown by the stanza where the girl he longs for (who comes from Brighton) is somewhere else (more specifically in California) with her boyfriend. With the last stanza Dylan might be showing his preference for family life, but, as Heine suggests, the vocal delivery creates ambivalence as to whether Dylan agrees with or accepts the lyrics.[82] The whole song sounds ambivalent, as it has no clear structure or straightforward form. The stanzas are sung with simple piano accompaniment, with Dylan in the beginning sounding heartfelt, while, as the song goes on, the voice takes on a painful character. Each instrumental break (the only cases where the rest of the instruments are heard) also has female backing vocals. The speaker indicates with his words, but not with the music and performance which both show that something like the situation depicted is unlikely to be achieved, a place of happiness and a state of fulfillment which he then rejects, as he is not sure if this is the happiness he aims for, or, that if it is, if he will be able to reach it.

As opposed to the examples given above, Dylan sometimes creates imaginary, non-existing places in which to situate his songs; these places either have the character of earthly paradises, being highly idealized, or the character of places where the weirdest situations can take place. In 'Talking World War III Blues', for example, which Shelton describes as a satire,[83] Dylan uses a non-existent, or, more particularly, a non-specified place to create a surreal imagery, having as an excuse the device of dreaming. The speaker lives this day in his dream as if it were another normal day, but, despite the fact

[81] Smart, p.190
[82] Heine, p.151
[83] Shelton, p.157

that he encounters a few people in the town, there is a strong sense of loneliness in the song. As Leeder and Wells suggest, the fact that through war scenery the speaker is occupied in his everyday activities gives the song the frightening resonance that 'the apocalypse comes but the world does not change'.[84] There is a stanza where the speaker finds a girl and asks her to play Adam and Eve but she refuses, comically reminding him what happened the previous time such a meeting occurred. In this way, Dylan seems to be reminding us – with a satiric attitude this time – that salvation is very hard to be attained for people, because, as Jewish and Christian ideas suggest, we are all fallen. Again, as Leeder and Wells note, the comical approach to serious issues is common in talking blues style.[85] Dylan in this case shows that even if people will have the opportunity to start again, the same mistakes would also be made all over again.[86] It is musically simple, with the guitar playing a repeated chord pattern, but, as Williams argues, borrowing much of its pleasant sound from the harmonica.[87] The vocal performance is playful and humorous, despite the fact that what is described might also sound frightening.

Smart argues that, like in 'Desolation Row'[88], the non-existent places Dylan creates around 1965 are more complex and unique than the 'folk places' he had created a few years earlier.[89] As already indicated (in Chapter I), 'Desolation Row' is a place of the absurd; a place inhabited by grotesque figures as well as familiar figures placed out of their usual environment (like Cinderella in the context of city life). This place, as

[84] Murray Leeder and Ira Wells, 'Dylan's Floods' in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, May: 2009), p.222
[85] Ibid
[86] Ibid
[87] Williams (i), p.77
[88] Further commenting on the lyrics and music of 'Desolation Row' has been done in Chapter I.
[89] Smart, p.186

discussed in a previous chapter, is most probably a mental space where social ills are depicted, one in which no salvation can be attained; it has to be abandoned, but, once it is seen it cannot be left behind. 'Gates of Eden', on the other hand, is a place depicted as a paradise, an ideal place in which there is only the truth. However, as Smart writes,

> [t]he screaming of grey flannelled dwarves and the squinting of foreign suns are among the many disturbing elements of this paradise that the singer alone manages to evade in the last verse as he switches from a detached prophetic voice to a saved first person.[90]

Shelton sees 'Gates of Eden' as '[t]he quest for salvation. Ultimately, the dread of heaven and hell faces everyone'. He goes on to cite Gabrielle Goodchild stating that this specific song is not about what is Eden, but what it is not; he is seen to be talking about the falsities of the current world; and that everything will end up in 'oblivion'.[91] Each stanza pictures the falling of the world, with Eden as a possible alternative, something that again evokes the image of the gulf between the real world and a perfect world people imagine and hope to achieve at some point. Morris observes that, despite the fact that this song was written in the early years of Dylan's career, he approaches paradise without cynicism.[92]

There is no specific explanation as to whether the 'Gates of Eden' acquires a positive or negative character as an imaginative place. 'Gates of Eden' can be seen, as Heine suggests, as a Utopian place, where worldly notions are excluded. Inside the Gates,

[90] Ibid
[91] Shelton, p.275
[92] Morris, p.169

none of the human concerns like trials, kings and sins are matters of importance.[93] Scaduto further emphasizes the positive character of the place described in the song: 'Dylan describes what he hopes to find at the end of that road [to salvation] in *Gates of Eden*.'[94] However, the images and phrasing of the song are scary and haunting, as no laugh is ever heard in the Gates of Eden and the lamppost stands with folded arms. Tamarin sees the 'Gates of Eden' as a nightmare place; the listener never gets the chance to realize what really is happening in the Gates, and thus, no salvation is offered.[95] One can assume that Dylan during the years of *Bringing It All Back Home* wanted to attain an other-worldly place which at times he imagines as a place of restoration and renewal, but which does not always have a positive meaning; in spite of there being 'no sins inside the Gates of Eden' and 'no truths outside the Gates of Eden', nevertheless we still cannot be sure whether the inhabitants of the Gates of Eden are happy or not.

The 'Gates of Eden', probably because it is a non-existent place, can be a place in someone's mind, a state of thought. Indeed, if someone wishes to be renewed, he has first to change his 'way of thinking'. Thus, in the early years of Dylan's work, not even paradise was on his mind as a place for salvation, as, in Shelton's view, '[t]he crowning irony of "Eden" is that heaven is more *and* less than we've been taught to believe.'[96]

Moving to the Spiritual Path

Through his artistic (and personal) development Dylan's views about place, movement and paradise have shifted, becoming more spiritually conceived. Dylan in his latest

[93] Heine, p.126
[94] Scaduto, p.242
[95] Tamarin, p.135
[96] Shelton, p.275

albums is still looking for the 'direction home'. According to Morris, the fact that the idea of mortality hovers in the background of the albums of his 'Modern Era' – which are *Time Out of Mind* (1997), *'Love and Theft'* (2001) and *Modern Times* (2006) – reveals another aspect of his art, and, in these albums, the 'direction home' might be clear.[97]

The album *Time Out of Mind* concludes with 'Highlands', in which we can hear 'Well my heart's in the Highlands wherever I roam/that's where I'll be when I get called home'. The choice of Highlands as scenery gives, as Heine suggests, the possibility to look at the world taking a distance, although the location in this case is more imaginary than real.[98] 'Highlands' is a long song, lasting more than sixteen minutes; its bluesy feeling collides perfectly with the old vocal style Dylan uses. The music is unchanged throughout the song, being calm and without any tension. It functions as the background for the painting of the story. The vocal melody is also simple and repeated, without any changes; it is as if an old person recalls memories and cites them. In the song feelings of desolation and despair are evoked but they are relieved, in Heine's words, from the hope for 'spiritual attainment achieved from a standpoint that unifies harsh judgment with stoic resignation, as well as self-mockery with feelings of joy and elation'.[99] In this song, reaching Highlands is not an unattainable goal, since Highlands is an existing place; but it becomes kind of unattainable since it is highly idealized in the speaker's eyes.[100] Thus, salvation is not to be found.

The movement towards 'Highlands' can be better interpreted as a movement on a spiritual path. Similarly, 'Ain't Talking' has the same effect. The speaker of the song is

[97] Morris, p.174
[98] Heine, p.217
[99] Ibid, p.194
[100] Ibid, p.217

having a journey in the night which, however, ends in the summer daylight, an image which, as Morris suggests, provides a sense of resolution.[101] The speaker is not talking, he is 'just walking', making a perpetual movement through 'this weary world of woe'.[102] According to Lewis, the scenery is dream-like, dark and enigmatic, as a 'mystic' garden that appears surrounded by ancient images.[103] The description of the place reminds us of the garden where Jesus was buried, but it opposes the story, as Dylan says to Magdalene that 'There's noone home, the gardener's gone'; this scene, according to Morris, might mean that, although the journey is over, the traveler might not yet have managed to reach 'chora', which remains 'compelling' and 'repulsive'.[104] The mystic garden is evident also musically, as the music sounds mysterious and other-worldly. The vocal melody is again repeated with not many alterations, and Dylan again sounds old and very experienced. The instrumental breaks in the song add up to the mystery and agony evoked from the sense of the unknown. Dylan treats the human final destination, death, again with the effects of place and entrapment descriptions in 'Mississippi'. In the song human mortality is recognized and death is considered inevitable; this is revealed, according to Child, in the first stanza and expressed in such ways as the speaker and his companion are feeling 'boxed in' and have 'nowhere to escape'.[105]

Dylan's tendency in the last years to refer to a spiritual path a man walks, can bring us back to the thought with which this dissertation begun. Human mortality is indeed a fact, and, the utopian thought of a heavenly paradise is what gives people the

[101] Morris, p.174
[102] Ibid, p.172
[103] George H. Lewis, 'Along the Dim Atlantic Line: Bob Dylan's Bootleg Series (Of Dreams)' in *Popular Music and Society*, 32/2 (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, May: 2009), p.274
[104] Morris, p.174
[105] Child, p.204

hope that human life is not meaningless. Thus, religious thoughts are evoked in Dylan again. It seems like the ‘direction home’ could take a specific notion.

In the course of this chapter we have discussed Dylan’s tendency towards perpetual movement and escape, his exploration for a home, the confinement and insecurity felt in specific places, and, also, the need to reach a place – whether existent or not – where peace, happiness, security, fulfillment and salvation can be achieved. We have concluded this chapter with Dylan’s description of the spiritual path that could be seen as the road to a man’s final destination, and, thus, as the path to reach paradise, which was, of course, the very idea that began this chapter.

Chapter V

Conclusions

When I started working on this dissertation I was aware that commenting on the work of any popular artist has its difficulties. Such problems are increased greatly when the artist happens to be Bob Dylan, someone who has been accorded iconic status in the world of rock and popular music, and on whom more has been written than on any other artist of his generation. One thing I wanted to avoid – and I hope it is obvious throughout the text – was to write this dissertation as a tribute to Dylan himself, both as artist and as personality. Instead, my basic aim has been to offer a conceptual context and to identify and develop a line of conceptual continuity that runs right through Dylan's prolific output as an artist – that is, the dominating idea of 'salvation', and a constellation of related concepts like redemption, reconciliation, atonement, seen from a Utopian perspective of what I have called the 'ideal place'. In the case of Dylan there seems to be a tendency to see 'salvation' as an ideal goal, an imaginary world to be reached, which is, however Utopian. As Levitas puts it: 'The construction of imaginary worlds, free from the difficulties that beset us in reality, takes place in one form or another in many cultures.'[1] I would dare go further to suggest that it takes place in one form or another in every individual who develops utopian views about the world. I have pursued ways in which these ideas of salvation and Utopia are being constantly reshaped and developed by Dylan over the years, whilst still remaining clearly evident in his work, as being central to his worldview and to his artistic creativity.

[1] Levitas, p.1

One of the most important issues concerning Dylan is his status as a poet, and it could be argued that Dylan is an artist who uses music to accentuate and communicate the ideas he has formulated in the lyrics of his songs – lyrics that rapidly acquired the status of poetry. The question whether Dylan can indeed be considered as a poet or not remains, but it is certainly the case that he has been nominated several times for the Nobel Prize for Literature, and also that many of the large number of books on Dylan have attempted to analyse his lyrics as if they were poetry. Dylan himself has never taken a specific stance in this argument, creating ambivalence as he commonly does; he sometimes opposes people who treat his words as literary objects, while at other times he seems to appreciate it. Regardless of Dylan's view, however – or any artist who is treated likewise – the listeners and critics have the right to treat his songs in such a way. But his words is not the only ingredient of his art that matters. It is uncommon for a popular songwriter to be constantly successful for fifty years just because his lyrics can be interpreted as poetry. His music and, not least, his performance ability, are also important elements of his art, that contributed significantly to his success and his artistic status. It is commonly accepted that through all the stylistic changes that Dylan went he never lost the audience's respect and he is still heard and admired today, almost fifty years after his first recording attempt, while keeping a respectful name. Dylan has always dealt with a very wide range of subjects. His songs concern issues of social distress, political protest, love, revenge, rejection, passion, drugs, fantasy, and the reality of constantly moving on, both musically and existentially. Every song shows a mastery of poetic metaphor. His melodic sense is of no less importance, even if his tunes might often give the appearance of being carelessly thrown together. They always seem to be the proper vehicles for the communication of his ideas, an impression driven home by the

conviction and distinctiveness of his performance style and the unique – and not always attractive – character of his voice. These are issues that I have addressed more extensively in the Introduction chapter, and are also brought out in every one of the other Chapters, while at the same time seeking to refer the enormous thematic diversity of his work and the compelling features of his performance style back to the underlying threads of conceptual continuity that I have argued run right through it.

In starting this dissertation I was intrigued by Gray's suggestion that Dylan's whole output is characterized by a constant search for salvation, a view that is supported also by commentators like Heine and Scaduto. Indeed, it needs also to be noted here that Dylan's leaning towards the search for salvation is a point of reference for almost all the literature written about him. In the process of looking at Dylan's work from this perspective it can be said that his search for salvation has a strongly utopian character which is mostly revealed through his descriptions of situations that simultaneously represent the ideal in combination with the realization that these kinds of situation are impossible in reality. This aspect of Utopian thought represents a general point of agreement among all writers on Utopia. This is exemplified by Levitas, who, in the first chapter of her book *The Concept of Utopia* compares different perspectives on utopian thinking. She writes: 'The acceptance that the proper role of utopia is to criticise the present is universal.'[2] As an artist Dylan takes this utopian stance and with his work he manages to criticize the present world while in the process offering glimpses of ideal situations for a better way of life.

In order to identify ways in which notions of salvation are treated in Dylan's work I first had to decide on an appropriate methodology for doing this. My approach has therefore been to adopt a threefold perspective, focusing on lyrics, music, and performance style. Thus,

[2] Levitas, p.34

apart from an extensive reading of the literature on Dylan, I also went through his entire output, listening to each of his songs again in the light of this multiple perspective. In retrospect, Dylan's songs seem to point towards ideas of salvation in a number of different contexts: a perfect society, individual fulfillment, a fulfilling romantic relationship, and that 'perfect place' which will bring about a sense of salvation.

Even if Dylan's search for salvation takes different shapes and forms in the course of its development, it always seems to acquire a religious resonance. This hovers over the whole of Dylan's work, and is something that has been highlighted at several points in this dissertation and can be seen as inseparable from the notion of salvation. This does not necessarily mean that Dylan through his work is pointing towards a specific religious belief, but rather that he is attempting to confront a deep human need for a sense of atonement and reconciliation in a world where reconciliation is often not achievable. This idea further supports the argument of this dissertation that Dylan's search for salvation has a strongly utopian appeal; Dylan through his work is critically pointing towards the world as it is, in a way that reveals his idea of the world as it should be. In doing this he presents a Utopian world for which one 'hopes' but which is unlikely to be achieved in reality. It is in this sense that I have proposed that Dylan offers us a world view that reflects Ernst Bloch's notions of the 'Principle of Hope' and the 'Spirit of Utopia', in which 'hope' is the most important factor for the development of utopian thought. This is, as we have seen, because it raises expectations and reveals desires for the improvement of things; it sets, as Levitas has proposed, goals: '[U]topia is seen as presenting some kind of goal, even if commentators, as opposed to the authors of utopias, do not see them as necessarily realizable in all their details.

At the very least, utopias raise questions about what the goal should be.'[3] It can be said that the utopian goal is set by regarding what one hopes, desires, and what one would like to improve in their life at a particular moment. What happens with Dylan is that, in many cases, the desires he presents express the audience's views as well. And this has been an important factor for his success, especially in the earlier years of his career.

Beginning his creative work in an era of important political and societal change, Dylan was initially connected with the image of an activist, a creator of 'protest songs'. Indeed, despite the fact that, as seen in Chapter I this label is not totally accurate, he has continued writing and singing extensively about politics and society throughout his life right up to the present. Dylan seems to acknowledge that the world is full of injustice and unfairness, something for which every kind of authority is considered as being responsible, and, while in many cases he seems to be aware of potential solutions, these do not appear to be achievable. As has been indicated at several points in the course of this dissertation, social utopias are pointing towards stability and harmony and, as Levitas has commented, utopia can be seen as a 'blue-print of a good but non-existent and therefore impossible society'.[4] As Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan suggest, this is the essence of Utopianism: 'Utopianism, consequently, is best understood as a process of social dreaming that unleashes and informs efforts to make the world a better place, not to the letter of a plan but to the spirit of an open-ended process.'[5] This kind of utopia is the one Dylan points towards with his songs, towards a society capable of offering a sense of security and stability and, thus, salvation. In

[3] Levitas, p.5
[4] Ruth Levitas, cited in Ben Anderson, 'A Principle of Hope: Recorded Music, Listening Practices and the Immanence of Utopia' in *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* (84/3,4, Special Issue: The Dialectics of Utopia and Dystopia, 2002), pp.211-227
[5] Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan, 'Introduction: Exploring Utopia' in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan (eds.) (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), p.11

opposition to this utopia, Dylan has created 'Desolation Row' to make us realize the chaos which we inhabit, and he goes on to suggest that however difficult it might be, a utopian society could be achieved in terms of individual fulfillment, and this is something that also includes the notion of spiritual fulfillment in religious terms. These two tendencies can be seen as similar in many respects if we take into consideration Dylan's implicit theological world view, which is one that does not actually have a specific religious identity, but which is accentuated by the 'biblical' language of his lyrics. Here Scaduto's early argument should be borne in mind:

> Dylan's experience has always been that of an alien in a mechanistic culture. Throughout, he has been trying to answer the questions: Who am I? What is existence? Dylan has been and is today a man seeking *personal* salvation. That search has led Dylan to religion. Not institutional religion, but the religion of the inner being, the unknown inside us all. God is 'I' – before He becomes socialized.[6]

Dylan's idea of individual fulfillment as a means to salvation is evident throughout his entire output. The way he approaches issues of identity and individual fulfillment should not, however, be understood solely in personal terms, as these songs are not intended to have any autobiographical references, but are rather general expressions of the artist's inner world. Through his songs Dylan shows how every individual has to confront the different aspects of his character and personality to find the kind of inner balance required in order to achieve fulfillment. However, the striving for a saved, fulfilled self can again be seen as efforts for achieving one's 'personal Utopia'; it is something for which people hope but, if human nature is taken into consideration, it might be unlikely to be achieved. This is critically

[6] Scaduto, p.286

commented upon by Dylan in songs that show human vulnerability as opposed to God's superiority, like 'Lay Down Your Weary Tune' where, as Gray has argued, Dylan shows 'the idea of God as an evenly distributed presence by suggesting a moral gulf between divinity in nature and the reductive inadequacy of man'.[7] It can be argued that, since Dylan recognizes the inferiority of the merely human faced with a 'superior existence' of some kind (and it has to be noted once again that he is not usually referring to any conventional notion of 'God'), then he can be seen as acknowledging that a human being cannot, by his very nature, be flawless. This is again evidence of what I have called Dylan's 'critical Utopia', which not only points towards a 'better place', but also reveals the gulf between how we should or could be and how we actually are. Thus, this attitude of him, reflects the central Jewish and Christian ideas, that suggest that all people are fallen and, consequently, no human can automatically be saved. This is why, when commenting on individual fulfillment, Dylan has also often drawn on drug experiences; drugs offer 'instant Utopias', mental trips towards 'artificial paradises'. Obviously the term 'artificial paradise' leads back to Charles Baudelaire's book, in which he points towards the achievement of an ideal world – we could dare to say, of Utopia – with the influence of drugs; more specifically he writes about opium and hashish.[8] These 'artificial paradises' or 'personal Utopias', however, can be achieved easily through using hallucinogenic drugs, but do not last long, as, after the trip comes to an end everything remains as before. The return to reality after the drug effects dissolve simply makes the opposition between 'Utopia' and the imperfection of the world as it is more explicit. Thus, the salvation that could be found through such artificial 'personal Utopias' changes nothing.

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[7] Gray, p.200-201

[8] Charles Baudelaire, *Artificial Paradises: Baudelaire's Masterpiece on Hashish*, Stacy Diamond (transl.), (New York: Citadel Press, 1998)

Whilst at times Dylan's work has pointed towards inner reflection and perfect solitude as ways to salvation, the cases when he points to romantic relationships as being able to provide redemption and fulfillment are no less frequent. This takes us back again to ideas of the religious and in particular the ascetic in his work. According to Gray,

> Dylan's quest, as it is unfolded in the songs, has always been a struggle within him between the ideas of the flesh and the spirit, between love and a kind of religious asceticism, between woman as the saviour of his soul and woman's love seen as part of what must be discarded in the self-denial process necessary to his salvation.[9]

Nevertheless, throughout Dylan's work we find songs that show that a perfect romantic relationship can also be both fulfilling and redemptive, and can be a means to bring about a sense of salvation. Of course, in many cases Dylan seems distrustful of such relationships – at times by being dismissive towards women and at other times by revealing his ever-present tendency to leave and move on. However, even in cases such as these, he at one and the same moment reveals his distrust of such relationships while showing his hope that such a perfect relationship can indeed exist. This is why he is not satisfied by the kind of imperfect relationships he depicts in his songs. And, while there are times when Dylan searches for temporary salvation – as a parallel to the temporary salvation offered by drug usage that we have seen above – in temporary, physical interactions that are not intended to last for more than a few hours, he is nevertheless at the same time constantly pointing towards the ideal of the perfect, utopian romantic relationship. He is found at times trying to reach women who are elusive and hard to attain, and at others as recognizing the superiority of women whom he describes as goddess-like figures – even if he ends up by stripping the latter of their other-

[9] Gray, p.209

worldly qualities. There are moments when Dylan seems to believe in everlasting love, but this everlasting love is given again a 'utopian' character, as it seems impossible that it could ever be achieved. However, as we have seen in Gray's comment above, while on the one hand Dylan believes that a woman could indeed be the saviour of his soul, he simultaneously believes that a woman's love is 'part of what must be discarded in the self-denial process necessary to his salvation'.[10] It is clearly evident in many of his songs that Dylan considers that if he gets betrayed by a romantic partner, and becomes convinced that he cannot attain salvation through love, he can turn his hope to other aspects of salvation, not least religious salvation. In support of this idea we need to note at this point that the albums he released in the mid-1970s (the years of Dylan's problem with his marriage which eventually led to a divorce), especially *Blood on the Tracks* and also *Desire*, consisted of songs full of the emotions of love, pain and betrayal, while the topic of relationships gone wrong was one of the most recurrent themes of both albums. These albums were followed by *Street Legal*, which fuses the notion of salvation through love and salvation through religion, and is followed by the work of Dylan's overtly Christian years that speaks about salvation in religious terms.

Through the overtly religious character of his specifically 'Christian period' Dylan points towards ideas and images of heavenly paradise in his songs, the desirable Eden. As Bloch has put it, such a paradise, where souls are considered to go after death, makes human life seem less meaningless and trivial: 'This is indeed the divine realm, that which appears at the end, or that which announces, that which the Messiah, which Christ brings …'[11] As Levitas puts it when commenting on Joyce Hertzler's *The History of Utopian Thought*, 'The

[10] Gray, p.209
[11] Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, p.6

pushing of the Kingdom of God into an after-life took place because there seemed to be no way of bridging the gap between is and ought; the transition was only possible through the agency of divine intervention.'[12] This paradise can be seen as a place of the mind, a utopian, ideal place we have to reach in order to find peace and happiness. Heaven is seen in Dylan as our 'direction home', achievable only through perpetual movement, a constant 'moving on' along the spiritual path. He thus creates songs that describe the perfect places – either existent or imaginary – that can bring about a sense of security and fulfillment, while at the same time commenting on the negative effects of locations that create insecurity, through his use of images of confinement and stasis. In this process, Dylan reveals his conflicting ideas of utopia and dystopia through, for example, images of countryside and city, as the imagined places that can offer the Utopian salvation as opposed to the dystopias of the real world. This makes the imagery of perpetual movement employed by Dylan a central theme that emphasizes his underlying view that 'Utopia' and salvation can only be attained through an unceasing process of effort and change. As Levitas argues, the image of Utopia is something that also includes constant change as well. In her words:

> In conclusion then, a new definition of utopia is offered, which recognises the common factor of the expression of desire. Utopia is both the expression of the desire for a better way of being. This includes both the objective, institutional approach to utopia, and the subjective, experiential concern of disalienation. It allows for this desire to be realistic or unrealistic. It allows for the form, function and content to change over time. And it reminds us that, whatever we think of particular utopias, we learn a lot about the experience of living under any set of conditions by reflecting upon the desires which those conditions generate and yet leave unfulfilled. For that is the space which utopia occupies.[13]

[12] Levitas, p.18
[13] Ibid, p.8

Indeed, Dylan, expresses the desires – and the hope for their achievement – that have been generated through what he has been experiencing and what was going on around him. Both his experiences and his environment were shifting constantly, and it is hardly unexpected that his own approach to his art should also be constantly on the move. It is partly this that explains Dylan's own tendency to shift his musical style so frequently throughout his creative career. However, the emphasis on the goal of the achievement of salvation still remains throughout the corpus of his work.

There have been many attempts at the interpretation of Dylan's songs, and it has to be recognized that, while there are no final meanings to be arrived at, the songs open themselves up to multiple interpretations. This brings to mind Picasso's statement, as cited by Scaduto: 'Everybody wants to understand painting. Why is there no attempt to understand the songs of the birds? Why does one love a night, a flower, everything that surrounds a man, without trying to understand it all?'[14] So it is with Dylan's songs: they defy analysis, at least in any final sense, in that they retain their ambiguity. Dylan himself has always resisted those who try to interpret what he says. Each listener can find the meanings she wants – or needs – in the songs of Dylan. At the same time, as Susan Sontag has argued, art works resist interpretation. 'Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed of items of content, violates art. It makes art into an article for use, for arrangement into a mental scheme of categories.'[15] Bearing this in mind, I should make my own position clear in relation to the approach I have taken to the interpretation of Dylan in this dissertation. It came as a consequence of the

[14] Scaduto, σ.181.
[15] Susan Sontag, 'Against Interpretation' in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador USA, 2001), pp.3-14

acknowledgement that important critical observations can be made about these songs without us needing to invoke the support of Dylan's own 'intentions', what might be regarded as any attempt by Dylan himself to give this or that specific meaning to a song. It is entirely my responsibility that I have chosen here to interpret the songs in the specific way that I have, and to look at them from the particular perspective I have adopted. My argument in this dissertation is that Dylan's work is characterized by a constant search for salvation that always takes a critical utopian position which resists easy solutions and which is therefore compelled to keep on moving. It seems that this utopian aspiration for salvation will always be unattained, no matter how close it seems to be. Dylan seems to be always stating that it is not here, and it is not now – though it could be not that far away. In his words: 'Voices echo this is what salvation must be like after a while'.

Appendix I

Travelling through musical styles: Dylan's musical shifting

Indeed, Dylan began his career by writing and playing folk music, and he is generally considered to be the dominant figure of the American folk music revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s.[1] The folk revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s originated from the folk movements that had occurred since 1900 and it dealt with subjects such as the Cold War and the fear of a potential nuclear destruction, which were serious issues that concerned people and turned the attention of youth culture to more serious concerns.[2] Dylan, in this context, joined folk musicians and started using his art as a medium to communicate opposition against societal ills, in an effort to point towards the possibility of a saved, utopian, society. By doing this in a personal, distinctive way he ended up being considered as the 'Spokesman' of the generation represented by the folk movement, a label he never wanted.

Dylan made the shift away from the folk movement with *Another side of Bob Dylan* (1964). Even if it included songs that musically resembled the folk movement's idiom it differed in lyrical context and meaning, by revealing a more personal perspective on the artist's creativity. Gray argues that the songs on this album, even if they had disappointed many people from Dylan's audience, were more true and radical than protest songs.[3] This might be further supported by the fact that within the songs found on *Another Side*, Dylan shifts his finger-pointing away from general social commentary and towards

[1] Marshall (2007) states that the official beginning of the American folk music revival is considered to be the release of the song 'Tom Dooley' by The Kingston Trio in 1958, p.55
[2] Marshall (2007), p.57
[3] Gray, p.4

the effects that social ills have on individuals, a concept he would further develop after he 'goes electric'.[4]

Marshall places the American folk revival's peak chronologically in 1963 and suggests as an ending point Dylan's appearance with an electric band at the 1965 Newport Festival. Dylan 'went electric' at the Newport Festival of 1965 merely to demonstrate his opposition to those people who thought of him as their representative and, probably, as Edmonds proposes, because he was searching for a new musical language that could keep up with the innovations he had made as a lyricist.[5] In doing this he was influenced by the Beatles' music, as he confessed to Scaduto, because their music reminded him that you can achieve more things musically if you are not playing by yourself. After all, Dylan had spent his teenage years listening to and playing rock and roll music. Dylan's electric appearance at the Newport Festival of 1965 famously outraged the audience. As Boyd (who was present at the festival) says, what Dylan did then was totally innovative. He ignored the expectations of the audience and played the music he wanted that included non-linear lyrics, strong blues guitar parts and tense rhythms. He adds: 'The Beatles were still playing love songs in 1965, while the Stones played a sexy brand of blues-rooted pop. This was different. This was the Birth of Rock'.[6]

Rock culture's development would not have been the same without the existence of the 1960s folk revival.[7] The shift Dylan made in his musical style had an important impact on the popular music of that time and the future popular-music-to-come. Mark Polizzotti's book *Highway 61 Revisited* is also an important contribution to our understanding of

[4] Heine, p.111
[5] Ben Edmonds, 'Revolution in his Head' in *Bob Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Backstages*, Mark Blake (ed.), (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2005), p.60.
[6] Joe Boyd, *White Bicycles: Making Music in the 1960s* (London: Sherpant Tail, 2006), p.105
[7] Marshall (2007), p.57

Dylan's creativity during the first years of his electric turn.[8] Marshall approaches the electric years from a different perspective by exposing the artist's relationship with the audience and the establishment of his star status. Even after his departure from the folk movement, he keeps 'protesting' for a redeemed society through each individual's 'spiritual fulfilment', but in 1965 he also introduces the first example of another form of 'salvation', the one that can be achieved through the ideal relationship with a woman, which is implied in 'Love Minus Zero/No limits'. This theme underlies his art for many years to come and will be discussed in a later part of the dissertation. However, the majority of his creations during the first electric years convey the longing for an individual fulfillment, as the key to the 'Gates of Eden'.

As Stillwell argues, rock ideology is linked with an idealized romanticism that emphasized personal expression and the kind of socio-political consciousness that led to radical activism on different levels such as race, class and gender, or issues like the Vietnam War. But she proceeds by stating that such a way of thinking did not exclude the emergence of 'hedonism' as a key ingredient. At the same time when peace was praised, free love and soft drugs were supported. This was not a new phenomenon in American music, as drugs have been present ever since the early years of jazz.[9] During the years 1963-66 Dylan's song-writing was notably linked with drug usage, whether this means writing songs under the influence of drugs, or writing songs about them. Gill discusses Dylan's 'stoned' period in his article in *Bob Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Backstages*,

[8] Mark Polizzotti, *Highway 61 Revisited (33 1/3)* (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006)
[9] Robynn Stillwell, 'Music of the youth revolution: rock through the 1960s', in *The Cambridge History of 20th Century*, N. Cook and A. Pople (ed.) (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.418-449

giving examples of songs and albums of the period to support his position.[10] Williamson correctly observes that drug usage was not something uncommon during the 1960s and identifies the years 1965-66 as the years of Dylan's hardest usage. He also quotes Dylan as saying that drugs don't help him write songs, but they help him 'pump 'em out'.[11] Michael Gray points to 'Mr. Tambourine Man' as being a 'pop exploration of drugs' (Scaduto disagrees by writing that Dylan told him that 'Mr. Tambourine Man' is not about a 'dope trip' but it represents 'an awareness of his life that goes beyond the temporary insights that drugs may sometimes bring'[12]) and cites the surreal album *Blonde on Blonde* as a representation of acid rock, not because it is musically aligned with the term, but because it was the first album released that had to do with 'druggy music'[13]. The American reality of the 1960s rock culture was strongly related to drug usage and it was normal for the leaders of the rock movement to be involved. This is also supported by Joseph Kotarba in the essay 'Music as a Feature of the Online Discussion of Illegal Club Drugs'[14] and Joe Boyd in his autobiography *White Bicycles: Making Music in the 1960s*.[15] If it is supposed that the youth of the 1960s was using drugs to achieve a sense of spiritual enlightenment, then the years when Dylan was a drug user can be considered as a further attempt of the artist to reach the ideal state of mind that would lead him to happiness and fulfilment, that would help him come to terms with a side of himself that could lead him to that 'utopian' spiritual place where 'salvation' can be attained. It is important to add at this point that during the

[10] Andy Gill, 'Everybody Must Get Stoned' in *Bob Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Back Pages*, Blake, M. (ed.) (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), pp.84-87
[11] Williamson, p. 64.
[12] Scaduto, p. 186.
[13] Gray, p.119: Gray suggests that with this album, due to the influence that drugs had on its creation, he influenced the '"underground" explosion' of 'genuine exploratory work'.
[14] Joseph A. Kotarba, 'Music as a Feature of the Online Discussion of Illegal Club Drugs' in *Real Drugs In a Virtual World: Drug Discourse and Community Online* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), pp.161-179
[15] Boyd

late 1960s drugs were considered to open the door to everyone's 'utopia'. By using those essences people were mentally experiencing 'utopian trips'. They could reach fulfilment, even if it did not last for long due to the fact that it was actually artificial.

Despite the major importance of Dylan's electric years, they only lasted for a short period of time. After creating what Gray names as the first acid rock album, *Blonde on Blonde* in 1966[16], Dylan had to keep a distance from the recording industry because of the motorcycle accident he had on the 30th of July 1966[17]. During this period he disappeared personally and artistically from fans' and critics' sight, although he continued to play with The Band at the band's house, and some recordings resulted from these sessions called *The Basement Tapes*, which were released in 1975.

However, his official return to recording turned out to be a surprise for his audience, as in the next album he released he approached lyrics in a more biblical way and featured a simpler instrumentation. What is characteristic of that album, *John Wesley Harding*, apart from its stark contrast with the general psychedelic sound that characterized the period[18], is that the songs are all 'guilt-driven', and they point towards a kind of atonement and redemption. Scaduto argues that *John Wesley Harding* is an album that Dylan wrote about himself, and, by drawing heavily on the Bible for the words of the songs he is 'further emphasizing his search for redemption and salvation'.[19] The album was a surprise, since Dylan's work and life in the years before was, as Shelton points out, full of excess, while the newly-released album was dominated by a sense of calm.[20] The whole sound of it, with the effect of simple melodies and austere accompaniments, shows

[16] Gray, p.119
[17] Scaduto, p.245
[18] Williamson, p.210
[19] Scaduto, p.249-250
[20] Shelton, p.389

an artist who turns away from the late 1960s' 'wild musical explorations', as Shelton put it.[21] The album was political but not in the way that Dylan had handled politics in his previous albums. Marqusee supports this view by saying that this time Dylan brings forth figures like immigrants, hobos, drifters, rich and poor, landlords and outlaws.[22]

Less than a year later, in an era when the 'psychedelic sound' reached its peak, Dylan, as he states in his *Chronicles I* '…quickly recorded what appeared to be a country-western record and made sure it sounded pretty bridled and house-broken. The music press didn't know what to make of it. I used a different voice, too. People scratched their heads…'[23]. The album, *Nashville Skyline*, consisted of simple country songs and had no connection with the political situation of the time. The songs are performed with a different, smoother vocal sound.[24] This album is seen to be the vehicle that helped country music to reach a rock audience, and, as Williamson has pointed out, helped The Eagles to become one of the greatest bands of the 1970s.[25] However, as much as *Nashville Skyline* has a relaxed character because, as Scaduto points, it presents 'Bob Dylan, celebrating the joy of living, Bob Dylan, celebrating his own salvation'[26] it simultaneously provides images of traveling and moving on. It can be said that Dylan has found a place to stay, but only for a while, as the album's songs suggest that he does not plan to stay in that place for long. Images from 'Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You' can support this view, as, while Dylan says 'throw my ticket out the window', his stay seems to be for only one more night; he most probably will leave after that. The search for 'salvation' is not yet to be

[21] Ibid, p.391
[22] Marqusee, p.229
[23] Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume One* (London: Pocket Books, 2005), p.122.
[24] Marshall (2007), p.136
[25] Williamson, p.86
[26] Scaduto, p.

finished. With the country style of this album Dylan seems to focus on the benefits of family life, leaving aside any social commentary, but the following albums he released indicated a man who is disillusioned with human relationships.[27] He returns to electric rock sounds and the blues-derived influences to produce albums such as *Self Portrait*, *Planet Waves* and *Blood on the Tracks.* The latter, along with *Street Legal*, explicitly show an attempt to gain redemption through human relations, while also, as Heine argues, giving hints for the importance of self-discovery, love and care for the society in which one lives, rather than through a higher power.[28]

Dylan's country turn was not as awkward as the Christian turn he made a little more than a decade later. This is the only phase of his career when he uses the concept of salvation in the conventional religious way. In 'God, Modality and Meaning in some recent songs of Bob Dylan', Mellers supports this point with musical analyses of songs from that period in Dylan's development and comes to the conclusion that, despite a more straight-forward musical reference to gospel music, Dylan's work of the Christian period was not musically changed from the previous albums, though it was further developed.[29] As Marshall argues, the Christian Dylan lost his popularity mostly because his music went against the musical and social developments of the era. He used gospel-derived music and he attempted to 'preach' to his audiences – this was Dylan, the man who, some years earlier, had strongly advised his listeners not to follow leaders. Gray has argued that, even if during his Christian years Dylan seemed confident about his arrival at his spiritual destination, he was still coasting artistically.[30] And he goes on to add: 'And the history of

[27] Heine, p.103
[28] Ibid, p.169
[29] Mellers (1981), p.146
[30] Gray, p.248

Bob Dylan's output should have taught us that he not only doesn't stay in one place too long – he doesn't coast for long either, a creativity that has survived two decades was not going to disappear just because the 1980s had arrived.'[31] Marshall supports Gray's view, and states that this is normal for an artist who did not stay creatively stable within one musical style, especially if he is a rock musician; rock music, he argues, is dealing with the continuous search for authenticity, hence is characterized by constant change.[32]

After his gospel phase Dylan entered a period of creative struggle and difficulty, but the work of his 'Modern Era' has revealed some acclaimed albums, such as *Time Out of Mind*, *'Love and Theft'*[33] and *Modern Times*. Within the work of his later years he seemed not to have a specific point of view and he searched for salvation and redemption in various ways, using different possibilities.[34] Heine argues that in these later years he manages to combine oppositions in his performance in a way that they function positively in relation to the attainment of salvation.[35] Dylan does not seem concerned about whether the audience approves his music or he disappoints his fans. He has been the folk hero, the rock star, the country singer, electric rock again, the born-again Christian, and all of these together. As Mark Blake says, Dylan 'consistently defied critics and devotees by making the music he wants when he wants'.[36] Even if placed in a totally different conceptual context, as a comment on the music of Wagner, we could bring to the fore in this context Bloch's statement that

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[31] Ibid, p.248
[32] Marshall (2007), p.99
[33] The quotation marks used for the title of *'Love and Theft'* are deliberately placed by Dylan to comment on his own tendency to make explicit use of his work resources.
[34] Heine, p.107
[35] Ibid, p.107
[36] Mark Blake, 'Editor's Letter' in *Dylan: Visions, Portraits and Back Pages* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), p.7

> …it is precisely the inspired composer who must, in a completely detached way, be ultimately capable of remaining absolute and of seeing whither his art, only partly known so far and only to be explored through persistence, is leading him, into what immeasurably inner areas of his world radical expression is taking him.[37]

Hence, according to Bloch, an artist should not withhold himself from creating what he wants, in order to be lead through his perpetual creativity to his individual fulfilment.

[37] Ernst Bloch, *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, Peter Palmer (transl.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.63

Appendix II

Social Salvation through Spiritual Salvation

Taking the argument of social salvation as a result of individual fulfillment a step further we should turn to discuss a group of Dylan's songs in which he suggests that the lack of religiosity in people is the source of the social ills and what is needed for a well-functioning society is religious people. The theme of social salvation through religious point of view has been evident in such early songs of Dylan as 'Highway 61 Revisited', where, as Marqusee argues, the story of Abraham was introduced to relate the sacrifice of Isaac with the nexus of Media, money and war and it ended by offering an end which was not positive and the sense of disbelief.[1]

This is a position that remains in his art and is further explicit in later songs like 'Senor', in which Dylan presents a man who, exhausted and terrified by worldly realities like hostility and deception, wishes these were a dream.[2] It is a sad, powerful political accusation that shows that American foreign policy is 'confused and unjust'.[3] According to Mellers, Senor could be a worldly lord who holds a share of responsibility for the society's misery, but is also definitely the Lord, owner of the whole universe, with whom Dylan attempts to deploy a more substantial relationship.[4] The song, which spells rejection, shows an antiphony between the gospel priest and the congregation. It rejects the American lifestyle.[5] According to Pichaske, the choice of Lincoln Country Road is made to highlight the opposition of the greatest president of the USA with the political

[1] Ibid, p.171
[2] Heine, p.170
[3] Shelton, p.478
[4] Mellers (1984), p.196
[5] Ibid, p.196

schemes of the time.[6] Gray suggests that the voice in 'Senor' is 'post-Vietnam America, confusedly asking the Thirld World to reveal the way things really are'.[7] Even the personal relationship hinted at in the song seems to be destroyed not by its own failure, but mostly because of the world's incidents with their bad effects, as Mellers points out.[8]

There is a specific allusion to the incident when Christ overturned merchants' tables out of the temple, which is seen by Day to be used by Dylan to reflect the consistent fight of good and evil powers in the mind and the world.[9] Gray sees the specific allusion as an indication of Dylan's search for personal salvation 'in an attempt to make the leap from worldly meaninglessness to a new higher ground'.[10] Unfortunately, the 'trainload of fools' that peoples the 'painted wagon' are not able to recognize and accept the truth, as they have been destroyed from the Dragon of the Apocalypse.[11] Mellers suggests that the music is primitive and sophisticated, being pentatonic and having no blue notes, with the instrumental base to be written in the Aeolian mode.[12] He adds that the instrumentation creates Texan scenery with the sound of mandolin, while its assonance with guitar makes the sound of the song universal.[13] The vocal range varies from the intimacy of the lower notes, heard as speaking, to the hymnic quality. In the last stanza Dylan, after reaching the highest note of the song, falls on the tonic,[14] as what he described through the song has exhausted him. The speaker is 'stripped and kneeled' in humiliation in 'this place' which 'don't make sense to me no

[6] Pichaske, p.149
[7] Gray, p.216
[8] Mellers (1984), p.196
[9] Day (1988), p.95
[10] Gray, p.216
[11] Mellers (1984), p.196
[12] Ibid
[13] Ibid, p.197
[14] Mellers (1981), p.147

more' and a disturbing image is created with the song's anxiety and fear, which leads, according to Mellers, to no affirmation, as the speaker is asking what he is waiting for and he states to be ready when Senor would be ready.[15] According to Mellers, it is the austere instrumentation, which completely lacks blue notes, which is the song's element that shows that religious affirmation could provide the only answer to the social anguish.[16]

The 'trainload of fools' pictured in 'Senor' could also be the people of 'Slow Train', which is driven by what Day calls the 'urgency of Judgment'.[17] Dylan in 'Slow Train' abandons his newly preaching attitude to enter what Hinchey sees as the trivial world of sex and politics, 'economy' and 'astronomy', where he will be able to find his companions.[18] The importance of the song, as stated by Williams, is not the acknowledgment of Jesus or the recognition of the oncoming apocalypse, but the irony and venomousness with which he comments on social circumstances of the time.[19] Hinchey argues that it is in the third stanza where Dylan comments on how the loss of human spiritual independence led to the result of losing political and economic independence.[20] The spiritually weakened and morally depressed America is related here with the loss of its economic independence; Dylan occupies some xenophobic lyrics to show his opinion, such as 'All that foreign oil….Amsterdam and Paris', revealing a racist attitude that is, as Wilshin argues, unrelated to the Bob Dylan's known ideals.[21]

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[15] Mellers (1984), p.197
[16] Ibid, p.197
[17] Day (1988), p.99
[18] John Hinchey, 'Slow Train' in *All Across the Telegraph: A Bob Dylan Handbook* (Michael Gray and John Bauldie (eds.) (London: Sidwick and Jackson, 1987), p.180
[19] Williams (ii), p.141
[20] Hinchey, p.180
[21] Clive Wilshin, 'Charity is Supposed to Cover Up a Multitude of Sins', in *All Across The Telegraph: A Bob Dylan Handbook* (Michael Gray and John Bauldie (eds.) (London: Sidwick and Jackson, 1987), p.222

The sound of 'Slow Train' is captivating in the way the voice works together with the band's sounds, and this is, as Williams suggests, where the meaning of the song is located.[22] The singing voice is full of unease, a feeling also reflected by the bending notes of the guitar which plays with and against the singer.[23] The uncertain rising of the pitch[24] at the end of the phrase where the ominous train appears is heard by Negus as a hint of Christian hope within the unrighteous earthly world.[25] Mellers argues that the combination of the pentatonic vocal melody with the parallel fourths of the electric guitar give to 'Slow Train' a jazz flavor.[26] Despite the fact that nowhere in the lyrics is joy evident, the song is joyous in its sound, due to the band, Dylan's vocal delivery, and, especially, as Williams points out, the piano solo after the fifth verse, that summarizes the whole universe of the song in a brief period.[27] Mellers states that however bitter the words are, in musical and rhythmic terms, the slow train can redeem humanity.[28]

Relating religiosity with the idea of a better functioning society is not something new. Bloch has stated:

> Above all there is, as I said at the beginning, the utopian in religion. This is indeed the divine realm, that which appears at the end, or that which announces, that which the Messiah, which Christ brings – distant wish-images, with tremendous content and great profundity, which appear here, so that, I believe, one must also look at the social utopias and at what resounds in them and is set in motion by these wish-images.[29]

[22] Williams (ii), p.139
[23] Day (1988), p.99
[24] Mellers (1984), p.207: The writer calls the uncertain rise of pitch which introduces the coming of a train as a flat submediant major triad.
[25] Negus, p.133
[26] Mellers (1984), p.207
[27] Williams (ii), p.141
[28] Mellers (1984), p.207
[29] Bloch (1989), p.6

This is the case in ‘Senor’ and ‘Slow Train’. Dylan’s wish-image for a better society is set in motion by his belief that the spiritual fulfilment of people will be an important factor for salvation at all levels, not least societal. In a less romantic way, Levitas supports Bloch’s view, when she discusses Joyce Hertzler’s book *The History of Utopian Thought*, which seems to be contrasting the Hebrew prophets’ views with the later apocalyptists. She writes:

> Whereas the prophets believed the Kingdom of God to refer to a this-worldly Messianic state which was essentially the outcome of ordinary political processes, later writers were no longer able (for reasons of historical circumstance) to believe this. Instead, they hypothesized deliverance through miracle, and ultimately the hope of an eternal kingdom on earth was abandoned in favour of a spiritual heaven. The pushing of the Kingdom of God into an after-life took place because there seemed to be no way of bridging the gap between is and ought; the transition was only possible through the agency of divine intervention.[30]

This comparison further supports the evident human need for a redeemed, Utopian world, and comes in contrast with the realization that something like this is unlikely to be achieved in reality. Bearing this in mind, the shift towards the hope for some kind of divine, superior authority (not necessarily Christian, as I argue in this dissertation) would appear to be a natural development of this human need.

[30] Levitas, p.18

Appendix III

'Sometimes a Man must be alone': The Importance of Solitude

'Hurricane' is definitely a character who had trust in himself in the sense that the boxer[1] was strong enough to be spiritually released from the physical suffering of being in jail as an unfair result of racism. Heine sees 'Hurricane' as a 'modern-day Zen hero' who, through his self-assurance and self-assertiveness managed to be patient enough and turn his time in jail to an opportunity 'for contemplation and purification in rising above all detractors and obstacles'.[2] He goes on to suggest that the character used his inner qualities to liberate his spirit from the suffering his body was going through due to the unjust incarceration.[3] From Gray's point of view, while with this song Dylan writes what can be seen as protest song, it is weak as such, as the music of the song is stronger than the song's ideas revealed through the lyrics.[4] Gray's position on this is, however, disputable. Indeed, I suggest that the music is actually quite powerful, due to the energetic rhythm that serves to support the lyrics. At the same time, the effect of the sound of the fiddle, as heard in combination with the words, and also at those moments when it plays as a solo instrument, are liberating. This does not mean, though, that the ideas presented in the words should be underestimated; Dylan has indeed written a 'protest' song again after many years, and, even if musically this song is not aligned with

[1] Williams (ii), p.47: The song was written after Dylan felt inspired by the autobiography of Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter who (due to racial injustice) was in prison with accusations for murder. Dylan decided to fight against this injustice.
[2] Heine, p.7
[3] Ibid
[4] Gray, p.185

what is generally considered to be a 'protest song', the words can be definitely seen as finger-pointing.

According to Heine, the main character of the song constitutes an example of Dylan's affinity with every Outsider who tries to find authenticity and fulfillment within a society which is corrupted.[5] This affinity can also be felt in Dylan's delivery of 'Hurricane' in which, as Williams suggests, the feelings of love for life, freedom and justice, and the painful opposition to injustice can be heard.[6] It is important at this point to note Heine's position, where he comments on the fact that Dylan treats the story of 'Hurricane' 'in terms of Eastern imagery of meditative self-determination rather than the Western ideal of sacrificial martyrdom'.[7] This is a key observation at this point in the sense that if salvation and self-fulfillment in eastern religions are considered to be achieved through inner reflection, while Judeo-Christian beliefs suggest that salvation and self-fulfillment are attained only through suffering then, 'Hurricane', who is pictured in this case as a figure who suffered extensively, still needed to go through inner reflection and struggles to attain the desirable mental situation of a fulfilled self capable of surviving the difficulties he has to face.

In another of his songs, Dylan shows that if the elements of self-confidence, self-assurance and self-assertiveness evident in the character of 'Hurricane' are absent, then the person is destined to face difficulties that could even lead to destruction. 'The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest' can be seen as a song which raises the issue of a personality which is not self-assertive. The song lyrics allegorically present the way Frankie Lee was betrayed by his best friend Judas Priest who, in Heine's words, 'lures

[5] Heine, p.84
[6] Williams (ii), p.49
[7] Heine, p.7

him into giving over uncontrollably to temptation at a brothel'.[8] Morris describes the song as a statement of the danger hidden in someone's tendency to relate the sense of heaven with the sense of home.[9] I would take this statement further and consider the notions of heaven and home to be two distinctive places within the self. Self is where I suggest this allegorical story is taking place, in a state of perfect solitude, as the line 'But sometimes a man must be alone' hints at. As the lyrics indicate, Frankie Lee's desire to reach a safe home where he can find privacy and solitude seems to be unachievable, because he is someone who is a 'gambler/whose father is deceased'.[10] The song deals with issues of guilt, betrayal, foolishness and regret. This is further exemplified by the appearance of the young boy who carries Frankie Lee's dead body and who could be seen as a third part of the same self. The boy seems to have been aware of the danger Frankie Lee would have faced, but did nothing to protect him from the oncoming destruction. Heine points out that it is the young boy's phrase 'Nothing is revealed' that indicates 'the impenetrable mystery of hidden guilt that has not been redeemed and becomes the main obstacle to attaining spiritual freedom'.[11] Dylan's performance is a dynamic and assertive vocal delivery in speaking style accompanied by simple guitar chords and occasional solo harmonica interjections. The song can undoubtedly be heard as the narration of a story in which, in Gray's words, 'the conflicting claims of purity of heart and of pleasure, the rightness of belief and the foolishness of credulity'[12] never approach a positive end. For this particular conflict-ridden self, salvation cannot be attained.

[8] Ibid, p.141
[9] Morris, p.170
[10] Ibid
[11] Heine, p.141
[12] Gray, p.395

The confused self of 'Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest' is a character who re-appears in 'Tangled Up in Blue' where the narrator seems to search for salvation through other people and the relationship with them, but he ends up, as Shelton points out, seeing himself in a mirror,[13] realizing that salvation can only be gained through self-knowledge and individual fulfilment. In this song, as Carrie Brownstein suggests, 'making sense of a particular truth, or of an individual self, becomes increasingly fraught'.[14] The male protagonist of the song appears to be passive while the woman is the one who seduces and is considered to be the dominant person in the love story described. However, the man finally manages to take control of his own life and be able to feel good with what had occurred between him and the female character of the song (the words do not allow us to be sure if the 'she' described in each stanza of the song is the same woman).[15] The specific song is one of the most explicit cases where Dylan applies what he had learned from his art teacher at the time, Norman Raeban; the song is characterized by what Williams calls a sense of 'timelessness' and can be compared to a painting in the sense that someone can see any parts of it separately, or all of it as a whole.[16] Raeban's influence on Dylan's creativity is mostly evident in the impressive lyric structure that shows how Dylan could now see things from a different perspective and, as Heine shows, manage to create passages that blur present, past and future through flashbacks and asides, a technique used in the album, *Blood on the Tracks*.[17] Heine hears the lyrics 'We always did feel the same,/We just saw it from a different point of view' as a revelation of

[13] Shelton, p.441
[14] Carrie Brownstein, 'Blood on the Tracks' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan*, Kevin J. H. Dettmar (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.157
[15] Williams (ii), p.30
[16] Ibid, p.23
[17] Heine, p.7

an ‘artist eagerly in pursuit of reconciliation rather than finger-pointing’.[18] This is a further example of the ideology shifting that accompanies his style-shifting. Dylan is no longer pointing at bad situations in a vengeful way; Dylan is pointing at reconciliation as the key to ‘salvation’.

The scenery where the song is taking place is constantly changing and, whereas Dylan finally states that he returns to her, he does not mention where it is she could be found,[19] creating in this way the ambiguity as to whether salvation can indeed be found. By not stating where the woman is, the reconciliation is most likely to take place within the speaker’s self, in a mental space. The song has a bright, bouncy mood while the sound of the band is perfectly blended, assuring the speaker’s eventual control over his own life. Like the rest of the songs on *Blood on the Tracks*, ‘Tangled Up in Blue’ is a return to Dylan’s folk-rock sound, strongly influenced by twelve-bar blues, while also combined with guitar picking and harmonica solos, leading our memory back to Dylan’s impressive creativity of the mid-1960s.[20] The protagonist of ‘Tangled Up in Blue’ can now be saved, and, by realizing that no other person can contribute to his personal integrity, he uses his self-confidence and recognizes that individual fulfilment is something achievable.

However, the obstacle for the achievement of individual spiritual fulfilment in Dylan’s songs is not always the presence of another person. We realize that achieving ultimate solitude does not always lead to a state of relief. In the penultimate stanza of

[18] Ibid, p.157
[19] Williams (ii), p.25
[20] Heine, p.156

'Black Crow Blues'[21], a song which has a 'rural folksy blues' character with a noticeable twelve-bar pattern,[22] Dylan reveals the contradictory feelings experienced by everyone in times of uncertainty and insecurity. 'Sometimes I'm thinkin'/I'm too high to fall./Other times I'm thinkin' I'm/So low I don't know/If I can come up at all'. If the situation of insecurity described in the penultimate stanza of this song is not confronted, then fulfillment cannot be achieved. In the songs discussed above we have seen Dylan's awareness that personality is made up of many parts, having both positive and negative aspects, and, if one is not aware of this and not able to normalize the contradictions within him by having trust in himself and recognizing the positive aspect of being in solitude, then he might not be able to attain the desirable spiritual fulfillment.

[21] Negus, p.34: 'Black Crow Blues' as first released on *Another Side of Bob Dylan* constitutes the first recorded evidence of Dylan playing blues piano.
[22] Ibid, p.78

Appendix IV

Isis, Johanna, Sara and more Goddess-like Figures

The female presences described in 'Tough Mama', 'Hazel', 'All I really want to do', 'Meet Me in the Morning' and 'Absolutely Sweet Marie' are portrayed as elusive, while still keeping their earthly nature. But what could be more elusive than a vision, a ghost, a goddess-like figure who is portrayed as the ideal being and possesses somebody's spirit? The issue of women who are described as goddess-like in Dylan's work is the common aspect of the songs I now shall discuss. The first example, which is also the one which most strongly makes evident Dylan's critique between the real and the ideal in this respect is 'Visions of Johanna', where the physical presence of the earthy lover Louise is overshadowed by the strong spiritual presence of the 'Visions of Johanna'.[1] Day observes that within the song's lyrics it is never being declared what Johanna is, as it seems possible only to exclude what she is not.[2] Gray makes an interesting statement about the name Johanna, which is not only to be a name, but it also is 'the Hebrew for Armageddon'.[3] Whether Dylan was aware of that and he deliberately used Johanna to be the name for the visions or not cannot be said with certainty. It is however intriguing to link the notion of Armageddon with these visions, which are to be proved agonizing for the speaker. The song's words seem difficult to understand, but they become comprehensible if it is considered that the lyrical technique used is cinematic and not a real-time description.[4] Also, in this song, Dylan's ability to fit as many words he wants in

[1] Day (1988), p.119
[2] Ibid, p.122
[3] Gray, p.154
[4] Mellers (1984), p.145

one line without modifying the melody, the rhythm, the meter is evident.[5] In 'Visions of Johanna' there is shifting from I to he and back again, something that functions as a psychological reflection of the speaker's acknowledgment of the double identity of the part of him which is with Louise and the other part that lives with Johanna's vision.[6] The idea of cause and effect is also present in the song, evident in the line 'everything's been returned which was owed': everyone will get what they deserve, and every action will bring a return, whether a benefit or a punishment.[7] Since Johanna is other-worldly and does not actually exist, the singer would never receive a reward or punishment for all the feelings he has invested in her.

The song's ending is built into a longer stanza which finishes with the word 'explodes'. The rhyme scheme is AAA BBBB CC, but in the last verse becomes AAA BBBBBBB CC, and the number of the B rhymes on this occasion is able to give more gravity to the last two C rhymes.[8] After the explosion only the visions of Johanna remain, and these visions, as Day suggests, exclude 'certain stereotypes of women'.[9] This can be seen a further evidence of the gulf Dylan recognizes between the idea he has for a perfect relationship and the real relationships he knows. Here, earthly values are thought to be trivial, and therefore Louise, because she is earthly, can also be set aside. The fact that what remains after the explosion are only images of Johanna is further underlined by the music, since the rhythm and harmony are strong, but the vocal melody cannot easily be defined, something appropriate, as even the melody seems to have been created through

[5] Williams (i), p.194
[6] Mellers (1984), p.145
[7] Heine, p.132
[8] Williams (i), p.194
[9] Day (1988), p.121

the state of fantasy and dream the speaker is in.[10] Marshall writes: '[t]he words themselves are carried along by the drumming, softly spoken yet with a military insistence, while the feeling of longing generated by the song is thrown into sharp relief by the spiky guitar lines that punctuate the verbal lines.' [11] The haunting feeling of the song is projected by the sound of the organ. Williams states that even though the sound of the band is very full, Dylan nevertheless achieves the feeling of a solo acoustic performance,[12] evoking in this way a sense of solitude, as if nobody else is there but himself and his visions. Day suggests that if the slowness of the recording as it appears on the album in combination with the lyrics conveys the feeling of tiredness of the speaker because of the visions, then the fact that Visions of Johanna are all that remains in the end can be considered not as a victory but as defeat.[13]

The speaker in 'Visions of Johanna' cannot attain salvation, even if Johanna could be obtained, since, as she is a vision she is 'coveted' and if caught, then she will lose what makes her so attractive to him – her spiritual, incorporeal essence. As O'Dair suggests 'He's just in it for the chase'.[14] However, an earthlier goddess-like woman is portrayed in 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands'. The woman, as Mellers puts it, is depicted as religious and magical, having the elements both of a Madonna and of a harpy.[15] She has a 'saintlike face' and a 'ghostlike soul'. Williams correctly observes that despite its sensuality, the song doesn't assert the element of sexuality, even though it is

[10] Mellers (1984), p.146
[11] Marshall, 'Bob Dylan and the Academy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Bob Dylan.*, Kevin J. H. Dettmar (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.103
[12] Williams (i), p.194
[13] Day (1988), p.124
[14] O'Dair, p.82
[15] Mellers (1984), p.149

implied in the potential of the others ('who among them really wants just to kiss you?').[16] The song comprises one of the rare occasions among Dylan's songs where the melody is more captivating than the lyrics at first.[17] Mellers argues that the circular 6/8 pulse, along with Dylan's delivery and the tone that gets darker at times evoke the feelings of fulfillment and, also, of regret.[18] The words gain a mythical status from the music. Marshall agrees, pointing at the awkward quality of the words which are excessively symbolic and thus unclear and he continues by stating that the warm feeling they gain is created by the music.[19] Indeed, the music can transform or overshadow the content of the words in many occasions. Like Laing has pointed out, as cited in Middleton, the music is not forced towards a particular meaning by the lyrics but 'the words of a song give us the key to the human universe that the song inhabits'.[20] Mellers suggests that the fade-out of the harmonica functions as a claim for the timelessness of Eden, but negative feelings spring from that claim, as Eden is not for ever.[21] Indeed, the power of the song lies in the underlying feeling that 'Sad-Eyed Lady' is far too good to be obtained, and far too distant from the reality, and, the recognition alone is enough to exclude the possibility of fulfillment.

However, there is a song in Dylan that describes a union between one of his male characters and a goddess-like woman. This song is 'Isis', where Dylan's protagonist is getting married to a goddess-like woman. Aidan Day, by commenting on the fact that the marriage is done on the 5th day of May, states that this is the month when the fertility rites

[16] Williams (i), p.188
[17] Ibid
[18] Mellers (1984), p.150
[19] Marshall (2009), p.103
[20] Middleton, p.228: cites Dave Laing (1969), p.99
[21] Mellers (1984), p.150

took place, while number five is the number of the Great Goddess, representing Demeter, Ishtar, Aphrodite and Isis. It is also the number of 'hieros gamos', the unison of the opposite elements, the archetypal marriage of Heaven and Earth.[22] Shelton suggests that with Isis, Dylan uses the Egyptian example of Isis and Osiris to 'evoke palpable spacelessness'.[23] The image of the marriage implies the situation of a fulfilled desire that raises the feeling of wholeness.[24] But the speaker ritually ends up cutting his hair and goes on an adventurous journey, maybe because, according to Mellers, while being surrendered by Isis' qualities, he wants to regain his masculinity and prove himself to her.[25] Williams explains that '[h]is desire for her, and her insistence that he be worthy of/attractive to her, has broken through his self-satisfaction and forced him out on a quest of self-discovery and renewal'.[26] Gray sees 'Isis' as a song that speaks as a parable for marriage, and states that it is impossible to be monogamous.[27]

As Mellers argues, the stranger the speaker encounters on the road conveys false expectations about material gains, but, he does not seem reliable, something evident even when he gives only 'his word' as an exchange for the blanket he was given by the speaker when he was cold.[28] It can be assumed that Dylan's protagonist was searching in the material world to find something that would satisfy him the way 'Isis' did, or, something that could satisfy her. However, the death of the stranger during the effort and the fact that there was nothing valuable in the pyramid indicates that nothing earthly could make him forget and abandon her. This is why he quickly buries him and chants a

[22] Day (1988), p.37
[23] Shelton, p.463
[24] Day (1988), p.38
[25] Mellers (1984)., p.189
[26] Williams (ii), p.52
[27] Gray, p.213
[28] Mellers (1984), p.189

quick prayer and immediately thinks of returning to Isis, not to claim anything, but just to state that he loves her. As Mellers suggests, their reunion seems ambiguous, as, heading from the east to the west to find her he places a curse upon her, but, when he eventually arrives and she asks if he would stay he replies positively, if she would want him.[29] The ambiguity is also apparent in the music, with the harmonic ostinato that does not include a dominant, and the voice melody that wanders above it.[30] Day argues that the presence of the verb 'drive' in the present tense in the last stanza destroys the character of endlessness created by the previous verse, while the re-appearance of the first lyrics of the song show the possibility for the circle of the wedding to begin again.[31]

Isis appears necessary for the speaker, but it was specifically this need he had for her that had driven him away, thus, whilst the relationship makes him feel accomplished and fulfilled, his individual integrity seems to be threatened. Gray supports the idea that, even if the speaker considers Isis as spiritually superior he, however, begins to doubt her as such; the fact that he has left her in order to search for something even he does not know and, dissatisfied with what he found, he returns to her might as well be implying that Isis is used as a 'temporary shelter before he sets off on the real, final quest'.[32] Fulfilment is nothing but elusive in this occasion; the narrator seems to be ambivalent as to whether it could be achieved through this relationship. While he does not seem to exclude such a possibility he simultaneously is seen as ready to leave Isis behind.

The goddess-like figure of the 'Sad-Eyed lady' is also revisited in 'Shelter From the Storm', but this time the male protagonist is presented as an outlaw who is

[29] Ibid, p.190
[30] Ibid, p.190
[31] Day (1988), p.45
[32] Gray, p.214

personified as a possible hero, and even associates with the image of Jesus.[33] The song speaks about an encounter that offered the speaker 'redemption of isolation and alienation, of disorder and depletion'.[34] The woman offered him relief from many difficulties and hardships by taking off his 'crown of thorns' and also offered him good times.[35] The relationship is portrayed in two phases in the first and sixth stanza; in the first stanza, 'twas in another lifetime' shows the time of salvation, when he have been saved by the woman and in the sixth stanza the time of pain, when something that went wrong is depicted.[36] After he drove her away and realized that he lost her he is trying to gain redemption ('In a little hilltop village, they gambled for my clothes/I bargained for salvation an' they gave me a lethal dose/I offered up my innocence and got repaid with scorn/"Come in", she said, "I'll give you shelter from the storm"'). In an extreme form of religious creativity, there are many examples in Dylan's work from the time of *Blood on the Tracks* and afterwards where he compares himself with Christ, and this happened, according to Gray, because he saw that they were 'both charismatic leaders, both message-bringers to their people, both martyrs because both *get betrayed*'.[37] This tendency is explicitly evident in 'Shelter from the Storm'. According to Gilmour, this stance exists from earlier in Dylan's career and does not occur because, as he puts it, 'he is a megalomaniac.' He goes on: 'Dylan clearly makes self-deprecating statements in his writing. Here we have a safeguard that prevents listeners from placing inappropriate expectations on him. Dylan the Christ-like prophet is quick to say, "It Ain't Me,

[33] Mellers (1984), p.183
[34] Day (1988), p.66
[35] Heine, p.33
[36] Gilmour, p.39
[37] Gray, p.210

Babe".'[38] In 'Shelter from the Storm' Dylan identifies with Christ, sacrificing himself to gain a 'lethal dose' of salvation. He offers his innocence for exchange, thus, he is trying to find retribution in order to attain fulfillment and be freed from all the pain her loss caused him.[39]

However, even if things have radically changed, the refrain, that floats above a regular rhythm with stable harmonies of I, V and IV, reappears recalling happy memories and safe-guarding the safe shelter. However, as Gilmour puts it, 'the breakup is not the songwriter's fault, and his innocence is emotively and emphatically demonstrated by the application of Christological imagery to himself.[40] The way the speaker speaks consequently about his separation from her and the continuous quest for 'shelter from the storm' reflects the woman as an elusive presence, never finally seized.[41] The singer states that 'he had his signal crossed' by taking 'too much for granted', suggesting that the only route to salvation is denying the shelter of the woman –who is now seen as a harpy – and attaining his own responsibility.[42] Dylan has come to the conclusion that even if the person you are involved with protects and makes you safe you cannot be fulfilled through the relationship, since the powers of the two parts are not in balance. Thus, however convenient such an interaction might be, it definitely would not be ideal. However, ambivalence is raised as the song ends with evident longing for the old days;[43] 'it promises a return to wholeness or speaks of what could have been'.[44]

[38] Gilmour, p.40
[39] Heine, p.33
[40] Gilmour, p.39
[41] Day (1988), p.66
[42] Mellers (1984), p.183
[43] Gilmour, p.40
[44] Brownstein, p.158

After a brief period of time, a song would be released where a woman with goddess-like character would be formed as a real woman, even given a name. 'Sara' is depicted as an earthly wife and mother and, at the same time, as Dylan's moon-goddess in a 'calico dress', identified with Diana, a goddess figure with bow and arrow.[45] The words of the stanzas would be overwhelming if not for the images of the children playing heard in the refrain.[46] The music of the stanzas as combined with the music of the refrain is unsettling from one perspective, giving the song a haunting character.[47] The vocal melody and the way it is delivered is heartfelt and has a hint of painful regret, while having indirect similarities with Hebraic cantillation.[48] Again, it is risky to comment on the performance of this song if somebody is aware of the fact that Bob Dylan and his wife, Sara, were soon to be officially divorced; the song is a statement of admiration and awe for a lady whose characteristics are other-worldly, but one who once was attained and lost due to singer's fault. 'You gimme a map and a key to your door', he sings, as if after her loss he is lost and cannot find redemption and deliverance. But in 'Sara', as Williams claims, even if the words could not communicate any meaning, the feelings would be evoked by Dylan's voice and the words would be heard only as sounds, because it is a song that receives its power from the sound of Dylan's voice when it is being sung.[49]

After his confusion and his artistic, personal and religious wandering, Dylan will strip the moon goddess of the previous songs from the dark qualities of the mystery that

[45] Mellers (1984), p.193
[46] Ibid, p.193
[47] Ibid, p.193: In retrospect, the unsettling feeling of the song came to be seen as Dylan trying to admit the truth about his wedding which was about to end up in a divorce.
[48] Williams (ii), p.43
[49] Ibid, p.53

surrounded her in order to present her, as Mellers puts it, as a Jesus's follower.[50] Indeed, the object of 'I Believe in You' seems to have sacrificed the moon-goddess' mysterious grace to achieve a spiritual religious image. 'I believe in you even through the tears and the laughter' comes after the wild singing of the phrase 'even that couldn't make me go back' to give the song an ending of sweet vulnerability.[51] According to Mellers, since the amen cadence does not have a concluding character, as it is consisted of the IV-I, it shows that there is the need for faith, but there is not yet an assurance of acquiring it.[52] Thus, no positive resolution is given. As the song is ambivalently swinging between the love for a woman and the love for Jesus, Dylan does not clarify which direction his salvation seeking is pointing towards. However, it seems that the relationship described in 'I Believe in You', most probably the same depicted in 'Precious Angel', is one that offers the speaker hopeful feelings of salvation. Dylan has finally felt fulfilled through a romantic relationship. Dominants are avoided in 'Precious Angel', while sub-dominants are preferred, as well as tonics in first inversion, but, the jazzy elements of the song, especially evident in the initial stanzas, make it impossible to label it as a hymn.[53] The speaker could not make it on his own, as indicated by 'I just couldn't make it by myself', and this is why the presence of the back-up vocals is important; it seems, as Mellers argues, that the woman did not only open his way to the finding of God, but also for communion with other people.[54]

[50] Mellers (1984), p.209
[51] Ibid
[52] Ibid, p.210
[53] Ibid, p.209
[54] Ibid

Appendix V

Locating Love

Pichaske has observed that Dylan locates good women, who bring redemption instead of damnation in countryside scenarios, like 'Girl of the North Country', 'Love Minus Zero/No Limits', 'I Threw it all Away' and 'You are Gonna Make me Lonesome When You Go', while women related with sorrow are placed in the cities, like we see in 'Dirge' and 'Honest With Me'.[1] One of the rare occasions in which Dylan approaches a woman with a totally positive stance and without any feelings of irony or disbelief is 'Girl of the North Country'. The rural melody of the song, derived from 'Scarborough Fair',[2] is another way in which he creates the country scene the girl inhabits. The singer asks for a message to be brought to a former lover, and, by means of this device he approaches with nostalgic feelings not only the person, but also the place.

The speaker of 'Long-Distance Operator' wants to send a message through telephone to his loved one who is located in Louisiana. His thought is located there as well and by stating 'I believe I'm stranglin' on this telephone wire' shows someone who, as Heine suggests, is trapped in a place and he cannot leave.[3] It can be assumed that in this case it is not the telephone booth he is trapped in, but Louisiana as a thought, because his girl is there. The speaker attempts to reach the place mentally and not physically, but still relief is not given within the words of the song. Shelton has included 'Long-Distance Operator' in the same category of the songs on *The Basement Tapes* like 'Goin' to

[1] Pichaske (2009), p.156
[2] Mellers (1984), p.127
[3] Heine, p.139; other songs of *The Basement Tapes* which have the same resonance are 'You Ain't Going Nowhere' with the line 'Strap yourself/To the tree with roots' and the words 'Get me outa here, my dear man' from 'Lo and Behold'.

Acapulco', the songs which are 'tinctured with the search for salvation'.[4] Relief is not given in the music as well. The guitar lines convey perfectly the singing voice's feelings of anguish, not only when it is replying to the singer's lines, but even when it is occupied in dialogue with the harmonica in the middle and final instrumental breaks of the song.

In another song, 'Something There Is About You', the speaker speaks to a woman who reminds him of his youth, which is specifically located with the 'phantoms of my youth/Rainy days on the Great Lakes, walkin' the hills of Duluth/There was me and Danny Lopez, cold eyes, black night and then there was Ruth/Something there is about you that brings back a long-forgotten truth.' She evokes visions from the former places he has been and he has beautiful memories from there, and this is why he seems to want her. However, the music does not remind of countryside or more rural sceneries, as its character is more urban; the same applies for the singing voice. The woman might remind him of old days, but he acknowledges that she was not a part of these good memories.

The love described in 'Something There is about You' is hardly a true love, as it is based in memories raised from other situations and places, but the love of 'True Love Tends to Forget' is also not flawless. The woman is depicted as unfaithful but the speaker cannot abandon her. He asks her 'Don't forsake me, baby, don't sell me out/Don't keep me knockin' about from Mexico to Tibet'. This discrimination of places is symbolic, as Gray states that Mexico represents the warm, southern world of the sensuous as opposed to the cold, eastern, religious severity of Tibet.[5] Allegorically, this 'true love' depicted in the song creates such contradictory feelings which he describes with the places mentioned. The vocal performance is again contradictory, approaching the woman

[4] Shelton, p.384
[5] Gray, p.217

without hostility, even with a sense of tenderness; but the utility of female backing vocals at the refrain sounds affirmatively threatening. The music has an untidy feeling.

On the other hand, the speaker of 'Walk out in the Rain'[6] has traveled from far away to be with his woman, just to experience a betrayal from her. The song is co-written with Helena Springs and evokes images both of constant movement as the line 'My poor feet have walked 'till they're sore' indicates. The idea of perpetual movement is accompanied with the image of the rainy city, giving both a sense of insecurity and also a feeling of loneliness. The speaker is walking in the city on his own, not having a specific destination, feeling the rain after he has experienced a wrong relationship. The city scenery is not able to provide retribution in this case, and, most probably the speaker is talking to himself when saying 'Walk out in the rain/Walk out with your dreams/Walk out of my life/If it doesn't feel right/And catch the next train/Oh, darling, walk out in the rain'.

[6] Outtake of *Street Legal*, performed and released by Eric Clapton on *Backless*.

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